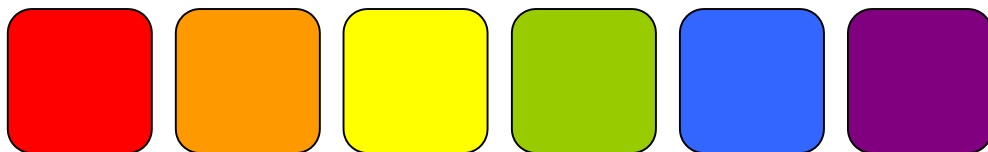


ourstory

events and people who have shaped the LGBT community

produced to coincide with LGBT history month, february 2005



proud: the voice of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans PCS members



Introduction

LGBT history month is an event designed to introduce a previously 'hidden' history to school children across Britain. Being overlooked in the national curriculum has meant that many of us within the LGBT community may also be unaware of the events and people who have come before us, made an impact on our lives (whether we realise it or not) or the contribution which LGBT people have made to society as a whole.

Education destroys ignorance.

Hopefully more and more school children will begin to learn that LGBT people are no longer figures of hate, fear, fun or ridicule. We have always existed and will always exist. We have been kings and queens, politicians and protestors, musicians and writers, thinkers and doers. And this especially important for those young LGBT people who are in our schoolrooms. No longer will they feel that they are the only ones. No longer will they feel that their lives will revolve around hiding and bullying. They will see that the only limits to their achievements are their imaginations...

On a personal note I must add that I do not like (or really approve of) history being a list of names, dates and the 'great and the good'. To my mind, history is the history of PEOPLE, the lives our ancestors led and the impact on them of social, political and economic change and THEIR impact on society. That said, to write that story would have been a mammoth task. So, as a compromise, this history lists 'the great and the good' (and occasionally bad), important events and those people who, through their bravery, dedication or even homophobic malice have shaped our community into what it is today. It is not intended to be exhaustive, and I'm sure you could list many, many people who you feel should have been included (and many who shouldn't!).

Andy Stuart

Editor, PCS Proud Magazine
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While PCS Proud retain the ownership of this document, where appropriate, we believe that information should be shared amongst all those in the LGBT Community. If you wish to use this document outside of the realms of PCS Proud, please get in touch and let us know how the information will be used.

POLITENESS COSTS NOTHING!

NOTES

Wherever possible relevant texts for each entry have been inserted at the end of an entry. A bibliography at the end of the document includes more general histories and further reading suggestions - where a person does not have a subsequent reference, readers should be directed to 'Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History'/'Who's Who in Contemporary Gay and Lesbian History' by Robert Aldrich and Garry Wotherspoon (Eds.) Where a particular incident or statistic does not contain a reference, readers are directed to the bibliography at Appendix 1

Not every person listed in this booklet is actually L, G, B or T. There have been many people throughout history who do not come into the traditional boundaries of our community, but have been supportive and brave in their support (and equally, there have been many only too willing to attack us!)

Unless an event or person highlights one particular part of our community (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender) I have used the term 'homosexual'. This should be viewed with caution as it did not actually come into existence until 1869, but entries prior to that date maintain its usage.

Countries are listed when they made homosexuality legal. Please treat these incidents with care: even though the homosexuality may be legal, it does not mean that homosexuals have not been subject to persecution. Also, although it is legal, the 'age of consent' for homosexuals is frequently higher than that for heterosexuals. For a guide to the 'state of play' with regards the age of consent, please see Appendix 2

620bc

Sappho born

One of the earliest and most respected of Greek Lyrical poets. Although little of her writing survives, what does display what many believe to be the first expressions of female love and desire. Hailing from Lesbos, her links with the island coined the term 'lesbian'. ['Lesbian Desire in the Lyrics of Sappho' – J. McIntosh Snyder](#)

470bc

Socrates born

Greek Philosopher, the first to subject ethics to philosophical scrutiny. Alleged lover of Alcibiades, a notorious bisexual philanderer. ['Greek Homosexuality' – K J Dover](#)

460bc

Aristophanes born

Greek dramatist. Usually the writer of bawdy plays, he is credited as being a contributor to Plato's 'Symposium' which recognises the power of sexual love and its search for the union with another, be it of the same sex or the opposite sex. ['Greek Homosexuality' – K J Dover](#)

450bc

Agathon born

Greek dramatist. Referred to as part of a homosexual couple with Pausanias – his long term lover – by **Aristophanes**. ['Greek Homosexuality' – K J Dover](#)

356bc

Alexander the Great born

Hellenistic ruler. Ran great military campaigns. Ancients also wrote of his love for boys, naming Hephaeston and Bagoas as two of his lovers. ['Homosexuals in Greek History' – T Africa, in 'Psychohistory' 9, 4](#)

100bc

Julius Caesar born

Roman General and politician. Despite his prowess in war and his numerous wives and female lovers, an attempt was made to discredit him by claiming he had a youthful affair with Nicomedes, King of Bithymia...some things never change... ['Julius Caesar' – M. Grant](#)

110

Antinous born

Favourite of the Roman Emperor Hadrian. Their strong relationship resulted – on the death of Antinous – in his deification by Hadrian as well as the establishment of a new city, Antinoopolis, in his honour. ['Beloved and God: the Story of Hadrian and Antinous' – R Lawbert](#)

1007

St. Peter Damian born

Although other contemporary texts looked into the penances for same-sex relations, Damian's work – 'The Book of Gomorrah' – looked at the subject head on - likening same-sex relationships to the infection of cancer or leprosy, as a crime which destroys the body and soul and which is a more serious offence than bestiality

1284

Edward II born

King of England. While he fought an intractable war with Scotland, he also fought with his own nobility over his love for another man – Piers Gaveston. So afraid of their relationship and Gaveston's influence, the nobility were driven to murder Gaveston in 1312, and Edward in 1327. ['Same-sex Unions in Pre-modern Europe' – J Boswell](#)

1319

Jean II de Bon born

King of France. Although married and father to 10 children, the great love of his life was said to be Charles de la Gerde. Their closeness elicited the fear and jealousy of the French Barons who had de la Gerde stabbed to death in 1354. After the murder, the King's grief was said to be greatly public, veering from fury to despair. ['Jean le Bon' – J Deviosse](#)

1400

Massimi born

Italian writer. Published 'Hecatelegium' in 1489 – which was so frank on the subject of homosexuality (Massimi even declared and celebrated his love of 'sodomy') that he was ostracised by literary historians. A notorious 'sodomite', admitting that when he passed, youths would touch their ear in a sign meaning 'poof' – a sign still in use today. ['Gay and Lesbian poetry from Sappho to Michelangelo' – J Wilhelm \(ED\)](#)

1452

Leonardo da Vinci born

Italian artist and scientist. While a youth he was tried (and freed on a technicality) of sodomising one Jacopo Saltarelli. In later years it was said his relationship with Gian Giacomo Caprotti was rather more than that of 'father and son'. ['Eros di Leonard' - Fimagelli](#)

1475

Michelangelo born

Italian sculptor, painter, poet and architect. The most important artist of the Italian High Renaissance. Despite the homoerotic nature of some of his works, there is no clear evidence of Michelangelo's homosexuality, or the consummation of sexual longing. It is known, however, that he fell overtly in love with one nobleman, Tommaso de' Cavalieri. ['Michelangelo' – H Hibbard](#)

1530

BRITAIN: Buggery becomes a capital crime (given a mandatory death sentence). Little distinction is drawn between male-male or male-female acts. These laws also covered the American colonies and therefore passed into US law on independence.

1564

Christopher Marlowe born

English dramatist and poet. While his plays 'Dido' and 'Hero and Leander' had homosexual subtexts, his 'Edward II' laid bare the 16th century view of homosexuality for all to see. The tragedy of the tale (see **Edward II** for details) left Marlowe open to critics and religious reformers alike. This, coupled with his alleged spying for the government, led him to be conceived of as a dangerous character. His death in a pub brawl has left many suspicious of foul play to this day. ['Sodometries' – J Goldberg](#)

1566

James I/VI born

King of Scotland (as James VI) from 1567 and King of England (James I) from 1603. His love of men aroused gossip from an early age. Notable partners included Esme Stuart (whom he raised to a position of power), Francis Stewart Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell (whom James kissed and embraced in public to great scandal) and Alexander Lindsay, Lord Spynie. His longest affair was with George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, which began in 1613. ['King James' – Antonia Fraser](#)

1571

Caravaggio born

Italian painter. His nudes, according to Margaret Walters, '(catered) to an openly homosexual subculture in Rome', while in his life he had a number of 'close friendships' with young men, including a fellow painter, Mario Minniti. ['The Male Nude' – Margaret Walters; 'Caravaggio' – M Calvesi](#)

1626

Kristina born

Queen of Sweden. Unusually educated (for a woman of the time) to a high degree, Kristina steadfastly refused to marry and was known for her cross-dressing ways. The great love of her life was Ebba Sparre, a beauty of Kristina's court, although she was known to be a lover to many women. One contemporary wrote of her behaviour 'In Lyon, she met (a woman) who greatly pleased her. She kissed her everywhere...and she even wanted to kiss the tongue in her mouth and sleep with her.'
['Queen Christina and her Circle' – S Akerman](#)

1706

BRITAIN

As many as 20 'molly houses' have grown up in London. Primarily pubs and hostels, these establishments are frequented by homosexuals to meet others and engage in acts frowned upon by society. It is known that 'marriages' between men also took place. During 1706, a mass purge on these establishments took place by the authorities. ['Mother Clapp's Molly House' – Rictor Norton](#)

1712

Frederick II born

King of Prussia. Established Prussia as a major European power. His homosexuality was an open secret, even during his reign. Had a long term romance with the French philosopher Voltaire. In 1753 'The Secret Life of the King of Prussia' was written, which exposed his homosexuality and his numerous male lovers. Frederick neither admitted nor denied the contents of the book. ['Frederick the great of Prussia: A homophile perspective' – S W Henderson](#)

1721

GERMANY: Catharina Margaretha Linck executed.

Tried for attempting to pass as a man and for marrying a woman. At her trial confusion reigned as the death penalty was designed for 'unnatural acts' which involved penetration (as the Bible only referred to male homosexuality). However, evidence suggested that Catharina had penetrated her lover with a leather penis, and so was sentenced to death. ['A Lesbian Execution in Germany 1721: the trial records' B Eriksson](#)

1726

BRITAIN

Another mass raid takes place on the 'molly houses' of London [Mother Clapp's Molly House' – Rictor Norton](#)

FRANCE

200 men are accused of sodomy. The 'leader' of the group is sentenced to death – and burned alive – while most get between 3 –6 months in jail. Some of the men hold positions within the Church and are banished.

1746

Gustav III born

King of Sweden. After staging a successful and popular coup d'etat, Gustav brought an era of culture to his country. However, his known preference for men and the fears of the aristocracy resulted in his assassination. Many writers, including his own sister-in-law, claimed that 'through his own exalted example', he had helped spread in Sweden 'this vice of men sleeping with men, which hitherto had been almost unknown here.'

1748

Jeremy Bentham born

British philosopher and legal reformer. Although not homosexual, Bentham was responsible for possibly the earliest scholarly essay on homosexuality to exist in the English language. His work on the subject refuted dominant Christian dogma, stating that 'pederasty' gives obvious pleasure and causes no obvious harm, while adding that, despite claims to the contrary, homosexual relations are 'natural but not necessary' (in terms of reproduction) with same-sex relations, natural and necessary (for reproduction)

Rancourt born French actress. The most notorious lesbian of her day, she was a sensation of the French stage, taking opera singer Sophie Arnould as her lover and, allegedly, marrying her. Her life remained subject to gossip, with pamphlets using her as a defence for lesbianism. Other rumours linked her to the Anandryne Sect, an imaginary association of man-hating lesbians. Whilst imprisoned during the reign of terror for her royalist beliefs, she met the last love of her life, Henriette Simonnot-Ponty. On her death, the church refused to bury her because of the dubious view taken of stage actors. However a furious mob broke down the church doors and triumphantly carried in her coffin. [‘Homosexuality in Modern France’ – J Merrick & B T Ragan \(Eds\)](#)

1756

BRITAIN: Captain Robert Jones tried for sodomy at the Old Bailey.
An ice-skater, Jones was the man most responsible for popularising the sport in Britain. However, in 1772 he was tried for sodomy upon one Francis Henry Hay. He was sentenced to death, but on the day of execution this was reduced to imprisonment, with a pardon granted by George III a month later, on the condition that he go into exile.

1770

FRANCE: Homosexuality is legalised.

1791

GERMANY: The Prussian directive that ‘unnatural acts’ be punished by burning at the stake is replaced by a more basic death penalty - usually beheading

1794

BRITAIN:
Crime figures at this time are patchy. However, figures for London and Middlesex reveal the extent to which ‘sodomites’ were pursued and punished. From 1750 – 1804, there was, on average, 1 execution per decade for all crimes. However, figures for 1804 show that from 1804 onwards, executions for sodomy were, on average, 1 annually.

1804

Alfred Tennyson born British poet. While at college he befriended one Arthur Hallam and the two became inseparable. On Hallam’s sudden death in 1833, Tennyson went into 20 years of mourning and melancholia, during which he completed the poem ‘In Memoriam’ which elevated him to Poet Laureate, primarily because Queen Victoria saw in the poem the exact feelings she felt at the loss of her beloved Prince Albert. Even on his death bed, Tennyson would proclaim Hallam as the greatest love of his life, a love ‘which surpassed the love of women’ [‘Tennyson: the Unquiet Heart’ – R B Martin](#)

1809

NETHERLANDS: Homosexuality is legalised

1810

BRITAIN:

There are 29 convictions in England and Wales for 'assault with intent to commit sodomy and other unnatural misdemeanours.' Of these, 80% of the convicts are executed, a much higher execution rate than for most other crimes

1813

BRITAIN:

There are 22 convictions in England and Wales for 'assault with intent to commit sodomy and other unnatural misdemeanours.'

1819

Walt Whitman born

American poet. Known primarily for his collection of poems, '[Leaves of Grass](#)', which contains the homoerotic 'Calamus' sequence. On publication, one reviewer denounced it as 'that horrible crime not to be mentioned among Christians.'. Resolutely gay, Whitman enjoyed numerous affairs, often turning his feelings into poetry. Whitman also had an important effect on the next generation: Oscar Wilde met Whitman and said that there is no other American whom he '(loved) and honoured so much'

[Walt Whitman: A Gay Life](#) – Gary Schimdgall

1830

Emily Dickinson born

American Poet. Hailed as one of the greatest female poets, Dickinson had an intense relationship with Susan Gilbert Dickinson, her eventual sister-in-law. Although the true nature of their relationship remains hidden, the passion which their letters display and the inspiration Susan provided to the poet show an intense love existed. '[The Passion of Emily Dickinson](#)' – J Farr

1833

BRITAIN: The unclaimed body of a woman, Eliza Edward, is discovered in London. Subjected to a postmortem, examiners discover that the physicality is that of a 24 year old male

1835

BRITAIN:

From 1805 – 1835 there were a total of 1,920 executions. For every 8 executions for murder there is one for 'sodomy' or 'unnatural misdemeanours.'

1837

GERMANY: The mandatory death sentence for 'unnatural acts' (namely sodomy) is relaxed to imprisonment.

Captain Moonlite (Andrew George Scott) born

Born in Ireland, Scott led an eventful life (army, church) before becoming an outlaw in Australia – quickly gaining a similar reputation in folk law as Robin Hood. Taking the name Captain Moolite, Scott quickly gathered a band of thieves together and became especially close to one James Nesbit. Nesbit was to die in a shoot-out after which Scott was imprisoned. While there he wrote letters which declared his undying love for Nesbit in terms which were extravagant and uncompromising. [‘Captain Moonlite: Bushranger’ – G Calderwood](#)

1837

Henry James born

American writer. Hailed as one of the greatest of American novelists, there was little speculation about his sexuality during his lifetime. However, more recent evidence has been uncovered, showing his close relationship with Hendrick Andersen, to whom he wrote ‘I hold you close, I feel, my dear boy, my arms around you.’ Upon Andersen’s death James wrote to Andersen’s brother: ‘...lean on me as a brother and a lover.’ [‘Henry James: a Life’ – L Edel](#)

1843

Freidrich Nietzsche born

German philosopher. Discovered his homosexuality in his youth and had numerous relationships, including Erwin Rohde at university and, in his later life, Paul Lee with whom Nietzsche lived in Italy and Switzerland. On his death bed, his homophobic sister destroyed many of his private writings and papers while censoring other texts. [‘Freidrich Nietzsche’ – V Gerhardt](#)

1844

Edward Carpenter born

British writer and social reformer. Influenced by **Walt Whitman**, Carpenter wrote poetic utopian visions and socialist tracts. His life long partner was one George Merrill. Millthorpe, where the two set up home, became a haven for radicals and gay men alike. His book ‘Homogenic Love’ (1894) was the first openly published defence of homosexuality by a homosexual in England. Other writings on the subject followed, despite the dangers for gay men following the trial of **Oscar Wilde**. In 1913 he was amongst a group who founded the British Society for the Study of Sex-Psychology, a forum for the positive discussion of homosexuality [‘Edward Carpenter: Prophet of Human-Fellowship’ – C Tsuzuki](#)

GERMANY: Legislation is amended to make only men punishable for ‘unnatural acts’, the implication being that women are incapable of homosexual acts.

1851

Oscar Wilde born

Irish writer. Possibly the first ‘modern’ celebrity in Britain, Wilde’s plays and novels enchanted and scandalised as much as he entertained polite society. He adored his wife and children while also enjoying various affairs with men – which was ultimately to lead to his downfall in a trial which would cast its long shadow over British gay men for almost the whole of the next century. **See 1895: The trial of Oscar Wilde.** [‘Oscar Wilde’ – Richard Ellman](#)

1854

Friedrich Krupp born

German Businessman. Head of his family’s steel and armaments firm – one of the biggest in the world. Spent much time on Capri – then a haven for lesbians and gay men - and enjoyed numerous relationships with men. A schoolmaster discovered such activities and passed the details to a newspaper which blackmailed him with the threat of publication. Krupp refused to give in and the article was published. Many left wing newspapers (including the German Socialist Party’s paper) weighed in and wrote about the corruption of youth by the German industrialist. Krupp sued for libel, shortly before his unexpected death from a heart condition. [‘The Seduction of the Mediterranean: writing , art and homosexual fantasy;’ – R Aldrich](#)

1855

Thomas Mann born.

German writer – perhaps the greatest of the twentieth century. After experiencing youthful infatuations with other boys, he passed into adulthood and had numerous affairs with men. However, these frequently were unsatisfactory to Mann, who often loved from afar. This psychological issue is best summed up by his novel 'Death in Venice' about a dying author's infatuation with a beautiful youth. His posthumously published diaries give us an intriguing insight into Mann's character. Mann was married and clearly loved his wife. Interestingly, of their six children the three eldest were homosexual. [` Thomas Mann: Eros & Literature' – A Heilbut](#)

1858

C P Cavafy born

Greek poet. The foremost gay poet in modern European literature. Critics have often praised the unique way Cavafy's work evokes the precariousness, sense of isolation and loss which can haunt those who are not central to a society's power structure. Influence on a great many people, including **E.M. Forster** and **David Hockney**. [`C P Cavafy: A Critical Biography' – R Liddell](#)

1859

Dame Ethel Smyth born

British writer, composer and feminist. From a young age Smyth rebelled against social constrictions which forbade a career for women of a certain class, to become a prominent composer. Although she had a longstanding relationship with Henry Brewster, Smyth often wore male attire and frequently fell for beautiful women. One such was **Virginia Woolf**. She composed the feminist anthem 'March of the Women' [`Ethel Smyth: A Biography' – C. St. John](#)

BRITAIN: Charles John Vaughan forced to resign as Head of Harrow school.

Ordained into the Church of England, Vaughan took over as head of Harrow school. In 1858 a boy at the school revealed that he was having an affair with Vaughan and had letters to prove it. A parent at the school threatened to make the news public unless Vaughan resigned and agreed never to accept an ecclesiastical position. Vaughan resigned in 1859, claiming that after 15 years service, he could offer nothing new to the school.

1861

Havelock Ellis born

British sexologist and writer. Published 'Sexual Inversion' in 1897 but all copies were instantly bought up by his embarrassed family. Later editions omitted his name but were convicted under obscenity laws and not published in again in Britain until 1936. Although not homosexual, Ellis' work contained a sympathetic tone which basically said that, despite the level of social hostility levelled against them, homosexuals were not mentally ill or neurotic and could lead normal, productive and satisfactory lives. The works also contained detailed case studies which enabled many who read the book to gain an understanding and acceptance of their sexuality. [`My Life' – Havelock Ellis](#)

A. E. Housman born

British poet and scholar, best known for his collection 'A Shropshire Lad'. Met and fell in love with a young man while at Oxford. He later travelled Europe indulging the passions which Britain forbade. His brother, Laurence, was an early homosexual rights activist. [`A E Housman: The Scholar-Poet' – R Graves](#)

1863

BRITAIN: The Offences Against the Persons Act is amended to remove the death sentence for buggery (which hadn't been used since the 1830s). The penalty became imprisonment from 10 years to life.

Nongoloza Mathebula born South African gang leader. Lead the Regiment of the Hills (or, the 'Ninevites') around Johannesburg in the 1890s. He issued a decree which stated that gang members were forbidden from physical contact with women. Many members therefore took 'boy-wives' from among their ranks. This system extended as far as the prison system and to this day the '28 Gang' model themselves on the Ninevites. 'Nongoloza' is still in existence as slang for 'sodomite' ['The Small Matter of a Horse: the tale of 'Nongoloza' Mathebula, 1867 – 1948' – C Van Onselen](#)

1867

AUSTRIA/HUNGARY: Karoly Maria Kertbeny invents the term 'homosexual'
When writing to the sexologist Karl Ulrichs, Kertbeny used the term 'homosexual' when describing his belief that such people should be free from state intervention and as such their behaviour should be de-criminalised. Prior to this such terms as 'similisexual', 'urning', 'uranian' and 'homophile' were commonly used.

1869

Marcel Proust born French writer. Most famous for the epic 'Remembrance of Things Past', in which homosexuality is written about as a society peculiar to those excluded from it (and in this respect Proust makes explicit comparisons between gays and Jews in western society). Proust had numerous gay affairs, but his ill-health and reticence to make himself public meant that it was his contemporary Andre Gide who became the emblem of French homosexuality. ['Proust: a Biography' – R Hayman](#)

1870

BRITAIN: Ernest Boulton and William Park arrested in London
Otherwise known as Mrs Stella Graham and Miss Fanny Winnifred Park, the two men were arrested in April 1870 for dressing as women while attending the Strand Theatre. They were subjected to an illegal medical examination and on the recommendations of the doctor, were subsequently charged with sodomy. However, when it was discovered that the 'evidence' would not stand up in court, the charge was amended to 'conspiracy to commit a felony' (sodomy)
A police search of their homes brought arrest for numerous others including Lord Arthur Pelham Clinton, MP.. The subsequent trial caused a sensation and is, perhaps the first time that the 'homosexual subculture' came into popular knowledge and also showed that homosexuality was a extensive, flourishing sub-culture which embraced all classes and roles in society.

GERMANY: Sodomy (Anal intercourse) is made illegal.

1871

Serge Diaghilev born Russian impresario. His influence on Western art in the twentieth century cannot be underestimated. Amongst the talent he championed were **Nijinski**, Stravinsky, Ravel, Satie, Prokofiev, Picasso, Matisse, and Cocteau. Others who sought his advice were Cole Porter and Kurt Weill. Like many gay men of his time, his affairs – apart from a 14 year relationship with Dmitri Filosofov - were rarely successful, probably because of the fear of his homosexuality becoming public. ['Diaghilev' – R Buckle](#)

1872

Willa Cather born American writer. Despite her cultivated image as a celibate, Cather had affairs with women, notably Isabelle McClung, Louise Pound and Edith Lewis. As was commonplace at the time, these relationships were hidden under the mask of being 'sisterly friendships'. Her works - such as 'O Pioneers!' – usually looked at the experience of settlers in the great American wilderness. However, one famous short story, 'Paul's Case', describes the scapegoating of a feminine high school boy and his subsequent flight to New York. ['The World of Willa Cather' – M R Bennett](#)

1873

1874

Romaine Brooks born

American painter. Her works frequently gave a glimpse into early twentieth lesbian life, with sitters including Una Troubridge (lover of Radcliffe Hall). She was also close to **Natalie Barney** whose life interlocked with the art avant garde, including **Marcel Proust**, Andre Gide and Colette. [‘Romaine Brooks: Thief of Souls’ – A Breestein](#)

Adolf Brand born

German activist and publisher. Published the first homosexual journal, ‘Der Eigene’, in 1899 and faced numerous prosecutions for publishing ‘immoral’ material. He believed that the disclosure of homosexual relationships amongst high ranking men would bring about the abolition of the legal ban on homosexuality. In pursuing this, Brand wrote a pamphlet accusing the German Chancellor of homosexual relations. The Chancellor sued and Brand was sentenced to 18 months in jail. Although a well known homosexual, Brand was not arrested under Hitler’s rule. [‘Homosexuality & Male Bonding in pre-Nazi Germany’ – H Oosterhuis & H Kennedy](#)

Gertrude Stein born

American writer. Pioneer of the ‘modernist’ style of writing. With her partner of 40 years, Alice B. Toklas, Stein reigned over a literary and art ‘salon’ in Paris, championing the likes of Picasso. She wrote an openly lesbian novel early in her career – ‘Q.E.D.’ in 1903, but it was only published after her death. [‘Gertrude and Alice’ – Diana Souhami](#)

1879

E.M. Forster born

British writer. Famous for ‘A Room with a View’ amongst others. Forster also wrote the homosexual love story ‘Maurice’, although this was only published, at his request, upon his death. His persona forbade the public expression of his homosexuality. [‘E M Forster: a biography’ – N Beauman](#)

1881

BRITAIN: ‘Sins of the Cities of the Plain’ published in London.

Purporting to be the autobiography of ‘Jack Saul’, this book gave vivid and detailed insights into the world of the ‘mary-anne’ or male prostitute.

1882

Virginia Woolf born

British writer. Foremost writer in the ‘modernist’ cannon, Woolf’s work encompassed the novel (‘To the Lighthouse’) and polemic (‘A Room of One’s own’). Although married to Leonard Woolf, whom she loved deeply, Woolf also had attractions to other women, notably Vita Sackville-West, with whom it is believed she had an affair. Her novel ‘Orlando’ (written for Sackville-West) is probably the first English novel to deal with a transgender character, albeit in a lyrical and romantic fashion. [The Diaries of Virginia Woolf \(5 Vols\); ‘Virginia Woolf’ – Hermione Lee](#)

1884

Anna Vock born

Swiss journalist. Collaborated on the homosexual emancipationist magazine ‘Freundschafts-Banner’ in 1932. When publication ended, it resurfaced in later years with Vock as publisher and editor. The magazine eventually became ‘Der Kries’ in 1943 and became one of the most influential and respected gay journals. Frequently attacked by the press (who published her address) she carried on with pioneering determination.

Eleanor Roosevelt born.

Humanitarian reformer, diplomat and writer. Possibly one of the most influential figures of the twentieth century, Roosevelt stood up for the disadvantaged in America, including African-Americans, youth and the poor. Her most famous action was to resign from the ‘Daughters of the American Revolution’ group when they refused to allow African-American singer Marian Anderson to perform. Her marriage to President Roosevelt became increasingly intellectual and Eleanor surrounded herself with a circle of women, many of whom were lesbian. Of these, she had an intense relationship with Lorena Hickok. Elected to the United Nations, Roosevelt was chair of the group who produced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [‘Eleanor Roosevelt’ – B Wiesen Cook](#)

1885

BRITAIN: 'Labouchere' Amendment made to the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Makes all male homosexual acts ('acts of gross indecency') illegal, punishable by up to 2 years hard labour. Possibly the most important piece of legislation to affect homosexual men as, for the first time, homosexuals were specifically legislated against in law, rather than earlier legislation which merely made certain acts (primarily buggery) illegal. Although such laws were used to target gay men, now the law recognised the homosexual as an entity and one to be feared and punished. Became known as 'The Blackmailer's Charter' □ **Sir Richard Burton undertakes investigations into homosexuality.** A renowned explorer and writer, in 1845 Burton investigated brothels in Karachi, making copious and detailed notes on gay brothels. Although not homosexual, in 1845, he produced his theory of the 'Sotadic Zone', wherein he described 'le vice' (as he termed homosexuality) as 'geographical and climatic, not racial', with the Sotadic Zone the primary container for homosexuality – this 'zone' covered the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Far East, and indigenous American cultures. His theories did not catch on.

1887

Ruth F. Benedict born

American scholar. A noted anthropologist, Benedict became eminent in her field and surrounded herself with a circle of women, including **Margaret Mead**, with whom she had a long affair. ['Ruth Benedict' – J S Modell](#)

Ernst Rohm born

German Nazi Leader. Initially a close confidant of Hitler, Rohm eventually fell out with the leader and was assassinated in the 'Night of the Long Knives'. His homosexuality was well known in Nazi circles and he used his position to promote fellow homosexuals to positions of power – helping create the myth that Nazism had its roots in homosexuality. Rohm apparently knew his position was a strange one – other high officials within the party were vehemently homophobic, and in a measure to bolster his position, Rohm adopted a fiercely 'macho' role. While Hitler tolerated his homosexuality, he did so only as long as Rohm posed no threat. Once Rohm's opposition to certain policies became clear, Rohm's position as a 'protected' homosexual (when thousands of others were beaten, murdered or put into concentration camps) was untenable to the Fuhrer, who acted swiftly and savagely. ['The Night of the Long Knives' – M Gallo](#)

1888

T.E. Lawrence born

British military figure and writer. Worked for British intelligence in Mesopotamia to advance British war aims. He spurred on the dubious Arab revolt against the Turks. His bestselling autobiography, 'The Seven Pillars of Wisdom' was written in 1918 to great acclaim and completed his myth. The complete version only published after his death. Lawrence spurned sexual contact and admitted he had no sexual attraction to women. His closest relationship was with a handsome Arab named Dahoun, whom Lawrence brought to Britain. It is suggested that '...Wisdom' is dedicated to Dahoun. One startling section of his book also described his torture at the hands of the Turks, who beat him and, although not explicit, raped him. On this, Lawrence comments that he felt 'a delicious warmth, probably sexual.' ['Lawrence: the Uncrowned King of Arabia' – M Asher](#)

Vaslav Nijinsky born

Russian dancer and choreographer. As a young man he rose meteorically to the top of the ballet professions but always displayed unconventional behaviour. His male lovers were numerous, including the impresario **Serge Diaghilev**. Under Diaghilev, Nijinsky came to the West and quickly eclipsed all other male dancers. Moving into choreography, Nijinsky was equally as successful, creating scandalous, experimental and idiosyncratic works. Nijinsky's last appearance was to make a mystical anti-war statement in 1919. Thereafter he fell prone to schizophrenia and delusion. ['Nijinsky' – R Buckle](#)

1889

BRITAIN: The 'Cleveland Street Scandal'.

During a robbery enquiry at a London Post Office, a telegraph boy was found to have more money than could have been honestly acquired. On questioning, it was revealed that he obtained the money by working in a certain house in Cleveland street, which was quickly revealed to be a male brothel. High ranking names were implicated in the enquiry, including the Earl of Euston, the Earl of Galloway and Lord Arthur Somerset. Rumours were also circulating at the time that another regular visitor to Cleveland Street was Edward, Prince of Wales. Although two men were convicted to 4 months imprisonment for attempting to conceal the 'crime' – one George Veck and one Henry Newlove - the 'nobility' were either found not guilty or inadvertently allowed to skip the country. Indeed, Labouchere, author of the 'Blackmailer's Charter', brought up the issue in the House of Commons, even claiming that the Prime Minister had had the affair covered up.

ITALY: Homosexuality is legalised

Jean Cocteau born

French writer, painter and film maker. Working at the height of post-impressionism and modernism, Cocteau was surrounded by a large group of homosexual artists, and as such helped make the homosexual much more visible within society. He had many male lovers, including Jean Marais, the most handsome actor of the era, which lasted 20 years. His work was also filled with homoerotic imagery and desire. ['Cocteau' – F Steegmuller](#)

Ludwig Wittgenstein born

Austrian-British philosopher. Having studied aerodynamics in Manchester and given distinguished service during WW1, Wittgenstein began to study philosophy, producing 'Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus' in 1922. Looking at the nature and understanding of language, the work quickly became regarded as a profound significant in the field. Later Wittgenstein worked in elementary education before returning to academia. His sexuality has long been investigated, with some stating he had wild affairs with 'rough young men.'. What is known, however, is that in his life he had four main 'companions', Frank Ramsey, a young philosopher, David Pinsent, Francis Skinner and Ben Richards, who remained with Wittgenstein until his death in 1951. ['Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius' – R Monk](#)

1892

Djuna Barnes born

American-French writer. Barnes saw herself as a work of art and dedicated herself to a life of rejecting conventions and norms – her writing, she believed, was simply a result of the life she led. In 1900, her lesbianism became clear when she published 'Quelques portraits, sonnets de femmes.', which caused her father to buy up all copies. She had numerous affairs with women. In France, Barney set up her salon, playing host to many notable gay men and lesbians of the art world including Proust, Colette, Andre Gide and many aristocratic lesbians. The salon was created as a specifically women's space and focussed on all-female entertainments and the presentation of the works of women writers, something which Barney pushed further with the foundation of the 'Academie des Femmes'. She believed that heterosex was a violation of women's wholeness, while lesbianism maintained purity and sensuality. She saw reproduction as a sap for women's creativity. Her 'Thoughts of a Amazon' and 'More thoughts of an Amazon' fully expound these ideas. ['Women of the Left Bank' – S Bernstock](#)

Janet Flanner born

American journalist. Finding married life not to her liking Flanner, a junior journalist, found love with Solita Solano who remained a major love of her life. She wrote the 'Letter from Paris' for the New Yorker, to great acclaim. At the same time she began work on 'The Cubical City', about sexual freedom, which was greeted with mixed reviews. She became known for her perceptive pieces on cultural, political and economical developments. Although she preferred an understated expression of sexuality, she maintained close relationships with lesbians both in America and Europe. ['The Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage' – Claude Summers \(Ed\)](#)

Vita Sackville-West born

British writer and gardener. Born into one of England's oldest aristocratic families, Sackville-West married Harold Nicholson and their marriage blossomed, despite the fact that she was predominantly lesbian and he gay. Both enjoyed numerous sexual conquests, in Vita's case with Violet Trefusis and Virginia Woolf. Her affair with Trefusis caused scandal in polite society. However, these 'highprofile' affairs do tend to overshadow Sackville-West's huge literary output and the influential work which eventually became the gardens at Knole, her home. ['Vita' – Victoria Glendinning](#)

1893

Wilfred Owen born

British poet. Began writing poetry before enlisting for the First World War. Suffering from shellshock, Owen was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital in Scotland where he met fellow gay poet Siegfried Sassoon. On returning to the Front, Owen was killed in action. His work was published afterwards – and became known as some of the best war poetry ever produced. Poems included 'Dulce et Decorum est' and 'Strange Meeting', with its homoerotic undertones. ['Wilfred Owen' – J Stallworthy](#)

Ivor Novello born

British actor, dramatist and composer. Generally known amongst theatre folk as 'not the marrying kind', Novello had many gay lovers and his own circle referred to his work 'The Dancing Years' as 'The Prancing Queers'. He worked in Hollywood (at MGM) and produced and wrote and appeared in 15 plays. He became know for producing lavish stage musicals, but his major success was the song 'Keep the Home Fires Burning.' ['Ivor Novello' – J Harding](#)

1895

BRITAIN: The Trial of Oscar Wilde.

By 1895 Wilde had fallen head over heels for the younger Lord Alfred Douglas. Douglas' father, the Marquis of Queensberry, loathed the effeminacy of Wilde and the general air of decadency which surrounded the notorious celebrity – so much so that he left a card at Wilde's club accusing him of posing as a sodomite. Wilde sued him for libel, but Queensberry supplied the court with so much evidence that Wilde's defence could only argue that his client was not a sodomite but he might seem to have posed as one. Queensberry was acquitted of libel while Wilde and Alfred Taylor were arrested and charged with indecency and sodomy. Wilde was eventually sentenced to two years hard labour. Inevitably, for one so wrapped up in his own celebrity, the trial caused outrage and scandal and Wilde, on release from prison, was a broken man, ending his days in exile. Although Wilde denied his homosexuality during the trial, this was only fitting with the times in which he lived. The trial itself brought out class divisions, with the Times stating that he belonged to a class of people whom it was difficult to believe could commit such acts. W.H. Stead, editor of the 'Review of the Reviews' stated that 'if all persons guilty of Oscar Wilde's offences were to be clapped into gaol, there would be a very surprising exodus from Eton and Harrow, Rugby and Winchester to Pentonville and Holloway.' However, the trial and the sensation it caused set a precedent for the treatment of gay men for the next century. ['Oscar Wilde' – Richard Ellman](#)

Alberta Hunter born

American Blues singer and songwriter. Born in Memphis, Hunter emulated the singing styles of Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor and Sophie Tucker, projecting an image of a tough woman who could take care of herself. She wrote 'Down Hearted Blues' which, when recorded by Bessie Smith became the best selling blues record of 1923. She travelled to Europe to escape the racism of America and became a sensation. Although she strove to hide her lesbianism, her songs always held a special attraction for gay audiences. ['Alberta – A Celebration in Blues' – F C Taylor](#)

Gluck born.

British artist. Real name Hannah Gluckstein, she rebelled against her rich family to become a painter and changed her name to Gluck, rejected traditional notions of gender. She had numerous relationships with women – including journalist Edith Shackleton Head with whom she lived from 1944 to 1976. Most famous for her landscapes and flower paintings which can be viewed in a very sexual light. She also created the 'Gluck' frame for displaying her works. ['Gluck: her biography' – Diana Souhami](#)

Willem Arondeus born

Dutch painter, writer and resistance fighter. Following the occupation of the Netherlands by the Nazis, Arondeus took part in numerous acts of resistance until he decided to attempt to destroy the Citizen Registration Building in Amsterdam, a place which held copies of all identity cards, allowing fakes (which were created for persecuted Jews and political activists) to be identified. The group taking part were betrayed from within and arrested. In 1943 Arondeus and 13 others were shot. As his last wish, Arondeus requested a pink shirt and instructed his lawyer to make public after the war that he was gay, to 'tell the people that gays are no cowards.'

1898

ENGLAND: The 'Vagrancy Act' makes importuning for 'immoral purposes' a crime. This is effectively used to target gay men.

1899

Noel Coward born

British songwriter, entertainer and actor. Although his sexuality was widely known, Coward never actually 'came out' – a stance which epitomised the situation of many major faces within the theatrical establishment. His work covered plays, films and songs '[Noel Coward: a biography](#)' – [Philip Hoare](#)

1900

Aaron Copland born

American composer and conductor. Achieved great success composing – favourite scores of his include 'Concerto for Clarinet' and 'Fanfare for the Common Man' while his film scores – including 'Of Mice and Men' and 'Our Town' were also well received. Apparently at ease with his sexuality while he – like many of his contemporaries – kept it a secret, yet he did travel and lived openly with his lovers. Alongside Leonard Bernstein, Copland is one of the twentieth century's most recognised composers. '[Aaron Copland: the life and work of an uncommon man](#)' – [H Pollack](#)

1901

Margaret Mead born

American anthropologist. Widely known for her study of 'primitive' cultures, possibly her most famous work is '[Coming of Age in Samoa](#)', which exemplified her interest in race, gender and sexuality. A pioneer in the use of photography and in team ethnology, Mead had many relationships with women during her lifetime but her autobiographical work emphasised her roles as daughter, wife and mother. '[Through a Daughter's Eye](#)' – [M C Bateson](#)

Marlene Dietrich born

German actress. One of Hollywood's most dazzling stars, Dietrich enjoyed roles of sexual ambiguity and in real life carried this out by wearing berets, suits and trousers (which she helped make acceptable for women). There were many rumours about her lesbianism, but Dietrich never spoke about the subject. For many lesbians and gay men, however, her image is a source of power and inspiration. '[The Sewing Circle: Female Stars who loved Women](#)' – [Axel Madsen](#)

1902

Langston Hughes born

American poet and writer. A prolific writer, Hughes was part of the Harlem Renaissance group of African-American writers of the 1920s. Although he never had a significant relationship, some of his autobiographical writings do mention sex with men and as such, his strength as a poet and his position in the African-American community have meant that Hughes has played an important part in the intersection between gay and black culture. '[Langston Hughes: Before and Beyond Harlem](#)' – [Faith Berry](#)

1904

Christopher Isherwood born

British-American writer. Author of numerous novels, plays, screenplays and translations, perhaps his most famous works being the 'Berlin' books, '[Mr. Norris Changes Trains](#)' and '[Goodbye to Berlin](#)' which were translated into the musical and film 'Cabaret'. He also wrote autobiographical accounts of his life, including '[Christopher and his Kind](#)' in which he came out as gay. Isherwood was one of the first writers to champion gay rights, insisting that sexual preference needed no apology.

W.Dorr Legg born

American activist. One of the founders of the modern gay movement. He saw the rise of the gay movement via its most durable organisation, 'ONE inc' and its magazine 'ONE'. In 1950 he joined the Mattachine Society, one of the prototype gay rights groups. He later founded his own group 'ONE Inc' and went on to become co-editor of the 'Annotated Bibliography of Homosexuality' (1976), still the largest reference work of its kind.

Tom Driberg born
British MP. From 1928 to 1933 Driberg wrote for The Daily Express, becoming a war correspondent during WW2. Originally an independent MP, he joined the Labour Party in 1945 and was MP for Malden until 1955. He served on the Labour National Executive Committee from 1949 to 1972 and became MP for Barking in 1959, a seat he maintained until 1974. Sexually promiscuous, Driberg enjoyed sexual relations with many men, often being arrested but managing to avoid public scandal. Despite the fact that he was never discreet about his homosexuality, it was never used against him by political opponents. [‘The Soul of Indiscretion’ – Francis Wheen](#)

1905

Greta Garbo born
Swedish actress. Travelling to Hollywood in 1924, Garbo (real name Greta Louisa Gustafsson) became a legend and superstar. While technically bisexual Garbo was, according to her biographer predominantly lesbian. Her screen image was always that of the powerful, sexually ambiguous woman, despite Hollywood’s determination for their stars to remain resolutely heterosexual both on and off screen. Her image so departed from the heterosexual norm that she proved to gay audiences that ‘difference’ could be acceptable. [‘Greta Garbo’ – K Svenson](#)

Quentin Crisp born
England’s stately homo. Crisp lived his life in public from a young age, dressing flamboyantly and being relatively unafraid of the world around him. He lived through beatings and abuse until he committed his story to paper with ‘The Naked Civil Servant’, the television adaptation of which became a critical highlight of 1970s British television. He eventually moved to New York where he became a major celebrity and carried on his witty writing, contributing to notable magazines. Acting roles soon followed. Sternly individual, Crisp disavowed the political fight for gay rights, even though he had fought for the right to be individual for most of his life. [‘The Naked Civil Servant’ – Quentin Crisp](#)

1908

Francis Bacon born
British painter. An entirely self-taught artist, Bacon established himself as one of the greatest painters of the twentieth century. Frequently violent and nightmarish, some paintings hinted at Bacon’s homosexuality, such as ‘Two Figures’ (or ‘the buggers’ as his friends called it) and ‘Two Figures in the Grass’. His homosexuality was known amongst his circle of friends, but it was only after his death that it became publicly known. His stormy affair with George Dyer is portrayed in the film ‘Love is the Devil’ [‘Francis Bacon’ – John Russell](#)

1909

Jean Genet born.
French writer. Abandoned as a child, Genet began a career as a thief which took him to a harsh reform school at 15, where he began to explore his homosexuality. After a period in the army, Genet wandered Europe and spent many sessions in prison for stealing. At this time he also began writing lyrical, sexual and violent, his novels became critically acclaimed. Titles include [‘Querelle of Brest’](#), [‘Our Lady of the Flowers’](#) and [‘Miracle of the Rose.’](#) In later years Genet began speaking politically, supporting the Black rights group The Black Panthers, the German terrorists Baader-Meinhopf and the Palestinians. The archetypal ‘homosexual-as-outlaw.’ [‘Genet’ – Edmund White](#)

1910

Tennessee Williams born.
American writer, possibly America’s greatest playwright. His most famous and critically acclaimed work being ‘A Streetcar Named Desire’. Although he had problems coming to terms with his sexuality, many of his works contain gay subtexts. While gay characters are unhappy, tragic or silly, in his later years, Williams came out on television and shortly after his death his ‘Collected Short Stories’ revealed his more oblique gay stories which were written without apology. [‘Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams’ Lyle Leverich](#)

1911

1912

Alan Turing born

British scientist. Pioneer in computing, most known for the 'Turing Machine' and the 'Turing Test'. The Turing machine was a prototype computing system produced in 1936. While serving during WW2, Turing was amongst those charged with deciphering the German 'Enigma' code which he successfully cracked. After the war, back in academia, Turing developed and built one of the earliest computers or 'electronic brains' as Turing called them. In 1951, Turing was burgled by a young man with whom he began an affair. When it came to light, Turing was arrested for gross indecency. He was given the option of imprisonment or 'organo-therapy' which involved the injection of female hormones. This resulted in a period of deep depression during which Turing committed suicide. ['Alan Turing: The Enigma of Intelligence' – A Hodges](#)

Harry Hay born

American activist. Hay began his first homosexual relationship at 17, in 1930. Declaring his sexuality to friends, Hay became involved with the Communist Party, who condemned homosexuality. Because of this, Hay suppressed his sexual urges and married. By 1951, the strain began to tell and he divorced. Upon reading the Kinsey report on human sexuality, Hay developed the idea of a homosexual organisation and alongside Bob Hull, Chuck Rowland and Dale Jennings, established the **Mattachine Society**. The group defended arrested gay men and began to work politically, questioning political candidates as well as producing a monthly magazine 'ONE'. Events during the Macarthy communist witch hunts forced Hay away from Mattachine. By the 1960s flower power attracted Hay and he began to create a new philosophy with the 'Radical Faeries', which established all male retreats and the theories of communal living for gay men, much of which evaporated with the times. ['The Trouble with Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement' – Simon Timmons](#)

ENGLAND: The punishment for being found guilty under the Vagrancy Act ('any male person who knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of female prostitutes, or who solicited or importuned for immoral purposes is deemed a rogue or a vagabond') is set at six months imprisonment, with flogging for a second offence, on summary jurisdiction (i.e. without a trial)

NEW YORK: The 'Heterodoxy' Club opens.

A social club for women, the aim of the club was to challenge society's norms especially around gender and sexuality:

'There is the strongest taboo on taboo. Heterodites say that taboo is injurious to free development of the mind and spirit.'

'It is the aim of the women not to hate, but to love one another. To realise the spirit of these words is one of the emotional treasures of life which all women desire, many of them fear, some of them seek, and a few of them find. We owe it chiefly to you that we may count ourselves among the fortunate finders. Like Lysistratum, Aspassia and Sappho, you have 'started something'

1914

Tove Jansson born

Swedish-Finnish writer and artist. Famous world-wide for her much loved 'Moomin' books, Jansson lived long term with her lover Tuulikka Pietila. Some of Jansson's adult fiction contains male and female homosexual characters, while the character of 'Too-Ticky' in 'Moominland Midwinter' was based on Tuulikka.

William S. Burroughs born

American writer. Using the seedy side of life and experimental 'stream of consciousness' techniques made Burroughs' work legendary. Alongside Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, he was a founder of the 'Beat' Generation of writers, who rejected a settled lifestyle for a life of travel and experience. His best known books include 'The Naked Lunch' and 'Junky' and have appealed to a homosexual audience because of their depiction of an 'outsider' society. Married, his wife died in bizarre circumstances (while drunk they played 'William Tell, but Burrough's aim slipped and instead of the apple, he shot his wife), and spent his later years with his long term companion James Grauerholz. ['Gentleman Junkie: The life and legacy of William S Burroughs' – G Caveney](#)

Axel Axgil born Danish Activist. Inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Axgil and friends set up the first Danish organisation for homosexuals, 'Forbunder af 1948' (the 'Association of 1948'), later the National Union of Gays and Lesbians, with Axgil as its first president. They also began the homosexual magazine 'Vennen' ('The Friend') in 1949. Publicity around the group's launch lost Axgil his job and meant exclusion from other positions he held, such as membership of the Youth Committee of the Town Council. Axgil and his partner, Eigil Agil, also ran a publishing company and the pair were arrested in 1955 for distributing material which 'although not obscene, may be deemed a commercial speculation with a sensual intent'. For this they were put in isolation for eleven months, followed by 12 – 18 months imprisonment. The police enquiry targeted many 'active' homosexuals and the resulting 'pornography scandal' meant the Axgils were excommunicated from 'Forbundet af 1948'. In 1954 they set up the International Homosexual World Organisation.. By the late 1960s the Axgils were allowed back into group Axel had founded and in 1989 they became the first couple to enter into a registered partnership which had just become legal via a Danish statute on same-sex partnerships

1915

Billy Strayhorn born American jazz musician and composer. Musically gifted, Strayhorn worked extensively with Duke Ellington. Later he would work closely with Lena Horne who commented, 'We looked at each other, clasped hands...and I loved him. We became one another's alter egos.' While they rarely discussed sexuality, Strayhorn's biographer wrote: 'He was in a minority among gay people in that he was open about his homosexuality in an era when social bias forced many men and women to keep their sexual identities secret.' ['Lush Life: a biography of Billy Strayhorn' – D Hajdu](#)

Roland Barthes born French writer. Alongside **Michel Foucault**, Levi-Strauss and Lacan, Barthes revolutionised the European and American intellectual landscape, notably with his ideas on 'structuralism' and the 'reading' of texts. He was also a pioneer in the notion of specific studies (such as lesbian and gay 'studies') as opposed to a general curriculum. While actively gay in his private life, he only came out publicly in his later years and did not approve of 'gay visibility' as he did not wish to pander to self styled 'communities' or 'identities'. ['Bringing Out Barthes' – D A Miller](#)

BRITAIN: Roger Casement executed

Born in Dublin, Casement spent much of his life working in the British consular service. He believed that Ireland should gain Home Rule and his theory was that this could be achieved with the help of Germany and America. His attempt to gain help from Germany during WW1 brought his arrest and imprisonment in the Tower of London. Shortly before his arrest, the British authorities discovered his homosexuality and his diaries fell into their hands – who used them to prevent any public sympathy for a plea for clemency. Casement was stripped of his knighthood and hanged in Pentonville jail. ['The Amazing Journal of Roger Casement' – A Mitchell](#)

1916

Carson McCullers born American writer. Famous novels include 'The Heart is a Lonely Hunter', 'Reflections in a Golden Eye' and collected short stories including 'The Ballad of the Sad Café and other stories'. Although married McCullers described herself as an 'invert' with the couple enjoying numerous 'love triangles. McCullers enjoyed intense relationship with women, the most important being that with the Swiss writer Annemarie Schwarzenbach, to whom she dedicated 'Reflections in a Golden Eye.' ['The Lonely Hunter: A Biography of Carson McCullers' – V Spencer Carr](#)

1917

Leonard Bernstein born American musician. Extraordinarily gifted, Bernstein's work towered over the twentieth century, with works such as 'West Side Story' and 'On The Town'. Later in his career, his sexual indiscretions and private beliefs (he was photographed with members of the Black Panthers, a radical Black rights group) meant that his works increasingly gained a hostile reaction. ['The Vinyl Closet: Gays in the Music World' – B Hadleigh](#)

1918

1920s

AMERICA/UK: The term 'gay' comes into usage.

Primarily used in the homosexual underground, the term 'gay' perhaps has its roots in 19th century London, when male prostitutes called themselves 'gay ladies'. Other terms becoming increasingly popular at this time were lesbian, lady-lover, queer and fairy. Faggot and bulldagger were also being used, though not always as terms of identification or endearment. □ **AMERICA: New York becomes a haven for homosexuals.** During this time huge drag balls and dances were frequently attended by same-sex couples, who became an expected slice of New York life, especially in the Greenwich Village and Harlem areas. By 1926, 'Variety' magazine carried an article noting as many as twenty Greenwich Village cafes and clubs which played host to 'the temperamental element'. Blair Niles' 1931 novel 'Strange Brother' comments 'In Harlem I found courage and joy and tolerance. I can be myself here. They know all about me and I don't have to lie.'

1920

Bela Abzug born

American politician and activist. Originally a lawyer specialising in labour law, Abzug became active in the women's and peace movements in the 1960s. She became a member of Congress in 1970 and has long fought for the equal rights of lesbian and gay people. By 1975 she had instigated H.R.5452, known as the **Civil Rights Amendments of 1975**, the first proposed national gay rights bill in America. Although not homosexual herself, Abzug has worked tirelessly to increase the profile of LGBT people and defend our rights. ['Bela Abzug' – Doris Faber](#)

1921

BRITAIN: Attempt to make lesbianism illegal.

An amendment is proposed to the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act to make lesbianism an act of 'gross indecency', with the same punishments metered out to gay men. The proposal is defeated, the reason being that it was believed that few women could even comprehend that such acts existed and accepting the proposal would only draw attention to such acts and therefore open them up to a new 'audience'.

Dorothy Martin born

Along with her lover **Phyllis Lyon** founded the first lesbian civil rights organisation in America, the **Daughters of Bilitis** in 1955. They also produced the group's magazine, The Ladder, which ran for 16 years until 1972. In later years they would also help set up the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. Despite the accusation that their philosophy was very conservative, Lyons and Martin were pioneers and paved the way for many other groups and, indeed, the gay rights movement as a whole. ['Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers' – Lillian Faderman](#)

Dirk Bogarde born.

British actor and writer. By the 1950s Bogarde had become a matinee idol to millions, with his heroic roles and handsome looks. He effectively destroyed this image with his role in **'Victim'** (1961) in which he plays a married man blackmailed because of a homosexual affair. On such a brave role, Bogarde commented, 'I realised it was a risk, I knew a lot of people would rather see me kill my wife on screen than play this role...but I decided it was a risk worth taking...this was a film about a real person with a real problem.'. Possibly his most acclaimed role was in 'Death in Venice' in which he plays a dying composer who falls in love with a teenage boy. He was always discrete about his sexuality, keeping his relationship with his agent Anthony Forwood (with whom he shared his life for forty years) a secret from all but a few. ['Rank Outsider' – Sheridan Morley](#)

1922

Andre Baudry born

French activist. In 1952 Baudry began writing for 'Der Kreis' (The Circle), a gay review published in Switzerland since 1932. He realised the need for a French gay organisation as, despite the fact that homosexual relations were legal between consenting adults, the state still repressed homosexual 'proselytism' in print and many men were arrested each year for 'gross public indecency'. In 1954 he began his own monthly review 'Arcadie', which had a circulation of 10,000 plus at its peak. However, it was banned from sale to minors in 1954 and remained so until 1975. In 1956, he was fined 40,000 francs for offending public morals, despite the review's conservative aim of educating homosexuals to accept themselves and to behave in a way acceptable to straight society. His beliefs can be summed up by the fact that he refused the term 'homosexual' instead preferring 'homophile'. To him homosexual meant someone who simply had sex with those of the same gender., whereas homophile meant someone who found fulfilment (spiritually, emotionally, sexually, intellectually) with someone of the same gender. In later years his conservative views became outdated as a younger generation began to demand equality without compromise. Like many early pioneers, his work cannot be underestimated. Without him and others like him the LGBT community would certainly be a different place.

Home Office figures show an increase of 119% in the number of prosecutions for 'unnatural offences' from 1915 - 1923

BRITAIN:

1923

In the period 1920 – 1924, there was an annual average of 62 prosecutions for 'unnatural offences', 215 for attempted sodomy and 176 for indecency in England and Wales

BRITAIN:

1924

NEW YORK: first lesbian themed play opens

Shalom Asch's play 'God of vengeance' opens on Broadway, one of the first commercially produced plays with a lesbian theme. One review said of it: 'A more foul and unpleasant spectacle has never been seen in New York'

Phyllis Lyons born
See Dorothy Martin, 1921

James Baldwin born

American writer. Foremost spokesperson for black America in the 1960s, he is also regarded as one of America's foremost novelists and essayists. His essay collections include '[Notes of a Native Son](#)' and '[Nobody Knows my Name](#)', while his novels include '[Go Tell it on the Mountain](#)', '[Another Country](#)' and '[Giovanni's Room](#)'. The latter caused controversy with Baldwin's publisher who rejected the manuscript, believing that its homosexual theme would damage his position amongst the black community and amongst white liberals who looked up to him as a spokesperson in the Civil Rights Movement. In the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington he was excluded from speaking as the civil rights leaders were uneasy about his outspokenness on the subject of homosexuality. While Baldwin disliked labels and showed little interest in the subject of sexuality (finding black rights a more compelling issue), Baldwin should be applauded for his outspoken views on homosexuality and the honesty with which he talked about his own gayness. Perhaps he is best summed up by the response he gave to Michael Parkinson when asked how he felt with the apparent blows which life had given him. He was black in a country filled with racism, poor in a country where money counts and gay in a country where homophobia was rife. Baldwin simply responded 'I thought I'd hit the jackpot!' '[Talking at the Gates: A life of James Baldwin](#)' – [James Campbell](#)

Gore Vidal born

American writer. Responsible for plays, novels, film scripts, political commentary and literary criticism. His early novels were widely praised, but his third, '[The City and the Pillar](#)' (1948) in which he attempted to refute homosexual stereotypes was savaged by critics and the New York Times refused advertisements due to its content. Vidal has intimated that it has haunted his literary career. Living in Italy with his long term partner Howard Austen, he disavowed gay politics, being suspicious of activism in general, but has been a consistent and admired critic of American politics '[Gore Vidal](#)' – [Robert Kiernan](#); '[Palimpsest](#)' – [Gore Vidal](#)

1925

Yukio Mishima born

Japanese writer. Gained fame with '[Confessions of a Mask](#)' (1949), a semi-autobiographical account of a young man with homosexual desires. He hated effeminate men and was devoted to machismo and bodybuilding. In later life he developed a fascism which merged nationalism with a worship of virile manhood. In 1970 he formed his own army and attempted to overthrow the Japanese army, believing that there had been a decline in his country's spiritual values. On defeat, Mishima committed 'seppuku', (a choreographed suicide) with the killing stroke administered by Morita, his alleged lover. '[Yukio Mishima](#)' – [Peter Wolfe](#)

1926

NEW YORK: First published work on homosexuality by an African-American.

The Harlem Renaissance publish the first and only issue of the literary magazine 'Fire!!'. It included poetry by Langston Hughes and Bruce Nugent's 'Smoke, Lilies and Jade', an erotic poem which was probably the first published work about homosexuality by an African-American author.

Allen Ginsberg born

American poet and activist. An early love of left-wing politics and **Walt Whitman** led Ginsberg to drop out of university and fall in with the 'Beat Generation' of writers, including **William S Burroughs**, Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassidy. At this time he also discovered his homosexuality, drugs and Eastern religions. Moving to San Fransisco, Ginsberg began writing poetry, producing the epic 'Howl!' in 1955. A landmark in U.S. literature, it was unsuccessfully tried for obscenity. Living openly with his lover Peter Orlovsky, Ginsberg became one of the first openly gay celebrities in America and, being seen as a sign of the degeneracy of U.S. society, was attacked by press and pulpit alike. He was also an active gay rights campaigner, being expelled from Cuba in 1965 for criticising the Castro regime's persecution of gay men and was present at the Stonewall riots in 1969. '[Dharma Lion: A Critical Biography of Allen Ginsberg](#)' – M Schumaker

Michel Foucault born

French Philosopher. Foucault's work revolved around the notion of thought and how it relates to society, economics, politics and history as well as the power structures within a society and how they relate to the individual. While often criticised for the broad, often lazy, use of historical facts his works are important to the intellectual landscape of the twentieth century, providing as they did, hypotheses which influenced the thinking in virtually all the social sciences. His three volume work '[The History of Sexuality](#)' popularised (but did not originate) the notion that the 'homosexual' as we know it is a social construct. Indeed, he stated that the medical profession invented the homosexual when it was named in 1869: 'the sodomite had been a temporary abberation; the homosexual was now a species.' Initially troubled by his own homosexuality, Foucault's sex life has long been dogged by whispers of untoward activities. However, the greatest controversies came late in his career when he denied the existence of the disease which would eventually be called AIDS and mistrusted safe-sex advice. Yet, his writings were inspirational for those seeking a bright future: 'Its not only a matter of integrating this strange little practice of making love to someone of the same sex into pre-existing cultures; it's a matter of constructing cultural forms. We have to understand that with our desires, through our desires, go new forms of relationships, new forms of love, new forms of creation.' '[The lives of Michel Foucault](#)' – D Macey

Christine Jorgensen born

American photographer and performer. At an early age Jorgensen was confused over her sexuality and eventually began to realise that it was, in fact, her gender which was the issue. Researching the issue, she learned of European doctors who worked in this area and set off for the Netherlands where **Dr Harry Benjamin**, carried out a gender reassignment operation. Returning to America as a complete woman, Jorgensen discovered that her story had preceded her and she became an overnight sensation – probably the worlds first internationally known trans person. The publicity ultimately stopped her from fitting quietly back into society and so she embarked on a stage career. Despite not being the first person to undergo gender reassignment surgery, Jorgensen is an important figure in trans history. The publicity she gained showed people, for the first time, the distinguishing difference between homosexuality and transgenderism. She was also important because in the interviews she gave she obtained complete control over the published articles – in effect she was the first trans person to be heard in her own voice. Finally, the immense publicity of the case gave a boost to the early pioneers in trans medicine and helped the research to become a more respected subject. '[A Personal Autobiography](#)' – Christine Jorgensen

1927

BRITAIN: 'Well of Loneliness' prosecuted for obscenity.

Written by Radcliffe Hall, 'The Well of Loneliness' dealt with the growing of a young lesbian and her affairs. On its release, the Sunday Express stated that 'it would be better for young people to take prussic acid rather than read this book: while poison kills the body, moral poison kills the soul.' The Home Secretary demanded that all copies of the book be withdrawn. When the publisher had copies printed in France, their offices were raided under the Obscene Publications Act. While other writers rallied to the cause – Virginia Woolf, E M Forster amongst others - for them it was a matter of principle, not artistic merit. The book was deemed obscene by the judge and , despite an appeal, all copies were destroyed. Whatever the merits of the work, from now on, Hall and her book had done what MPs in 1921 did not want to see – the notion of the lesbian being publicised for all the country to hear. '[The Trials of Radcliffe Hall – Diana Souhami](#)'

NEW YORK: Attempt to ban gay themed plays.

Considering the number of gay themed plays at the time, New York state legislature introduces the 'Padlock' Bill ` to prevent plays from 'depicting or dealing with the subject of sex degeneracy or sex perversion.'

1929

Adrienne Rich born

American writer. In her poetry and plays Rich reflects on the position of women in society, critiquing the fixed notions of (hetero) sexuality, femininity and motherhood as oppressive to women, exposing them as political rather than natural conditions. Her best known (and most controversial) work was '[Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence](#)' (1980) in which , looking at the history of women's relationships with one another, she started that all supportive relationships between two women can be placed on a broad spectrum of lesbian identity, whether the women identify as lesbians or not.

Jill Johnston born

American activist. Coming out as a lesbian just before the Stonewall riots in 1969, Johnston became a radical lesbian, writing for the New York 'Village Voice'. Her book 'Lesbian Nation' posited the notion that only a lesbian nation could undermine patriarchy, maintaining that every woman was born a lesbian and women who slept with men were collaborating with patriarchy in keeping women down. Essentially, she believed that heterosexuality was not natural to women. Naturally, her views made her few friends amongst straight and bisexual feminists. While her words were fierce , they should be taken in the context of the time, when the embryonic lesbian/gay and women's movements needed radical words to kick start their agendas.

1931

Jane Rule born

American – Canadian writer. Rule's first novel '[The Desert of the Heart](#)' (1964) instilled hope into many lesbian's lives for its realistic and – for the time uniquely – optimistic resolution. At first no publisher would accept the work and when it was accepted in 1961 it had to wait another three years before being published. Rule's other work was been in the essay form, contributing to many publications and magazines, notably 'The Body Politic', an important and influential review. Opinionated, brave and fierce, Rule was her own master, her policies summed up by her statement that 'policing ourselves to be less offensive to the majority is to be part of our own oppression.'

1932

Luc Montagnier born

French medical researcher. Both heterosexual, along with **Robert Gallo**, Montagnier is considered to be the co-discoverer of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). **SEE 1984: the discovery of the HIV virus.** '[And the Band Played On](#)' – Randy Shilts

1933

Joe Orton born

British playwright. 'The Oscar Wilde of Welfare State Gentility'. Orton wrote riotous plays which ripped apart middle class values and the hypocrisy of society notably including innuendo and gay themes together with a dark humour. His most famous plays include 'Entertaining Mr. Sloane' and 'What the Butler Saw.' However with the publication of his diaries and the biography by John Lahr, Orton became a bit player in his own tale. The diaries detailed his voracious sexual appetite (but should be treated with caution as the project was suggested by his agent) and the biography set him up as a figure in a pre-ordained tragedy, leading to his murder by his jealous and overbearing lover Kenneth Halliwell, who subsequently committed suicide. Many criticise this interpretation of the story, believing that society's homophobia and heterosexism allowed no role for Halliwell in Orton's public life, leading to his psychosis and their deaths. 'Prick up Your Ears' – John Lahr; 'The Orton Diaries' – John Lahr (Ed.)

1934

Audre Lorde born

African –American writer and activist. Her most famous work, 'Zami, a new spelling of my name' (1982) sums up the work of Lorde. As a black lesbian she saw the issues from multiple perspectives and worked to build across these differences to build respect for gender, sexuality and race. 'As a Black lesbian I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of who I am... My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am...only then can I bring myself to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living.' Examples of how others saw her 'differences' can be seen when she worked on a committee to 'Free the Rosenbergs' (who were to be executed as Soviet spies in 1953). Those on the committee, committed leftists, viewed her as suspicious because her lesbianism made her susceptible to the FBI. She has also maintained that her full acceptance amongst blacks was impeded by her lesbianism. 'Zami – a new spelling of my name' – Audre Lorde

1935

Larry Kramer born

American writer and activist. After writing the screenplay for Ken Russell's 'Women in Love', Kramer wrote the novel 'Faggots', a biting critique of the vacuous promiscuity which was the gay scene in the early 1970s resulting in attacks by many gay commentators. In 1981, following the discovery of Kaposi's Sarcoma in gay men in San Francisco, Kramer began to publicise the dangers of the possible 'gay plague', which again brought him criticism. Despite this, when it became apparent that the New York health system was not able or willing to provide services for men with what would become known as AIDS, Kramer set up 'Gay Men's Health Crisis', the world's first truly gay health advice service, a model for similar organisations throughout the world. In 1983, he wrote his famous '1,112 and Counting' article which urged the gay community to take AIDS seriously (the 1,112 referred to the number whom to be living with HIV/AIDS at the time). Yet again Kramer was attacked for this, so much so that he was forced to resign from the board of Gay Men's Health Crisis. In 1987 his speech at the New York Gay and Lesbian Community Centre sparked the founding of ACTUP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and proved to be a vital and important mechanism in highlighting the hypocrisy around the disease and the care-less attitudes of politicians and drugs companies. Once again, like his health organisation, ACTUP became a worldwide phenomenon and provided a template for many activist groups throughout the world. Kramer is best summed up by his entry in 'The Gay 100' (most influential people in the LGBT community): 'rude, opinionated, inconvenient, invaluable and irreplaceable, he is the most influential gay man in America today. The organisations he helped found have become some of the most important institutions in contemporary gay America's struggle to survive. If the community does in fact survive, it will owe that survival in no little degree to Larry Kramer.'

Robert Gallo born French medical researcher. Both heterosexual. along with **Luc Montagnier**, Gallo is considered to be the co-discoverer of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). **SEE 1984: the discovery of the HIV virus.** ['And the Band Played On' – Randy Shiels](#)

1937

David Hockney born British painter, photographer, printmaker and stage designer. Born into a 'radical working class' family in Bradford, Hockney studied at the Royal College of Art and initially came under the influence of 'Pop Art', producing paintings about homosexual relations, notably 'We Two Boys Together Clinging' (1961). Moving to California in 1963, Hockney produced some of his best known works which mirrored the climate and urban landscape of the sunny state. His painting also reflected his interest in the male form and gay relationships. He has also produced etchings to illustrate poems by **C.P. Cavafy**, experimented with photography, designed operatic stage sets while experimenting with new technology. ['A Portrait of David Hockney' – Peter Webb](#)

Ian McKellen born British actor. Initially a stage actor, McKellen won great acclaim for his role as a gay imprisoned in a nazi concentration camp in Martin Sherman's 'Bent'. Despite the harassment of lesbians and gays under **Margaret Thatcher**, McKellen came out in 1988 and was instrumental in the formation of the gay rights group '**Stonewall**'. His acceptance of a knighthood in 1991 brought criticism from many, including **Derek Jarman**, who felt it wrong for a gay man to accept such an honour from a government who harassed lesbians and gays so vociferously. McKellen has also used his time to speak out on gay issues and has recently found international acclaim and fame from his roles in the films 'Gods and Monsters' (in which he played gay filmmaker James Whale), the 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy and the 'X-Men' films.

1939

Dusty Springfield born British singer. Her husky voice, elaborate image and yearning songs made her a firm favourite amongst lesbians and gay men in Britain. She began her career in a folk trio with her brothers. However, her solo career began in 1963 and she enjoyed a string of hits which lasted through the 1960s. She enjoyed numerous affairs with women and was a frequent visitor to the infamous 'Gateways' Lesbian club in London. However, this was kept firmly hidden from view until the early 1970s when she admitted to her 'bisexuality'. A lover of black soul music, Dusty was instrumental in getting many of the 'Motown' acts their first television appearances in Britain. She also caused controversy when she agreed to play South Africa (in the mid-sixties before South Africa was boycotted by artists), stipulating that she would only perform in front of a non-segregated audience. When this proved not to be the case, she refused to perform and was sent back to Britain, where the press and politicians viewed her actions as either a cynical publicity stunt or politically naïve. Springfield may have been guilty of the latter, but her convictions were strong and forceful, as many of her collaborators would later testify. In the 1970s she relocated to America. Her career in free-fall, she took to drinking heavily and self-harming. It was only in the 1980s that she pulled herself back from the edge and began recording again, this time coaxed out of retirement by the Pet Shop Boys.

Michael Kirby born Australian High Court Justice. One of the few Australians at the top of the justice ladder to 'come out'. As well as being Acting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, he has also served the United Nations and UNESCO. Appointed to Australia's highest legal body, The High Court in 1996, Kirby came out two years later by simply his listing his male partner in 'Who's Who'. The 'usual suspects' crowed about this, stating that as he stated he lived with his partner since 1969 but New South Wales only legalised homosexuality in 1984, he was a confessed criminal and therefore not fit for his role.. He has also made 'progressive' stances on many social issues and made a supportive stance on HIV/AIDS when AIDS panic and a conservative backlash dominated the Australian public arena.

1940

Lillian Faderman born

American scholar. Has probably done more than any other historian to ensure that the lives of lesbians do not become invisible in history. Her first prominent work was [‘Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship between Women from the Renaissance to the Present’](#) (1981). The book examined the cultural, social and romantic same-sex relationships between women and pondered as to why some were condoned and others were not. A later book, [‘Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian life in the Twentieth Century’](#) was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. Her latest work is [‘To believe in Women: What lesbians have done for America – A History’](#) (1999)

Joan Nestle born

American author and activist. In 1973 Nestle was one of the founders of the Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York, the largest and oldest lesbian archive in the world. She has also published numerous short stories and articles, notably on the notions of ‘butch-femme’. She has also edited books, including [‘The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader’](#) and [‘Genderqueer: voices from beyond the gender binary.’](#)

Edmund White born

American writer. Often cited as America’s foremost gay writer, White struggled with his sexuality in his early life, being forced to undergo therapy. However, by the 1980s he became an activist, part of a group of writers who called themselves ‘The Violet Quill’ and was one of the founders of The Gay Men’s Health Centre. Some of his collections of essays concern the changing lives of gay men, while his first foray into gay writing was [‘The Joy of Gay Sex’](#). Probably his most widely read works are his semi - autobiographical novels [‘A Boy’s Own Story’](#), [‘The Beautiful Room is Empty’](#) and [‘The Farewell Symphony’](#), which together chronicle a gay man’s journey from youth to middleage.

1942

SWITZERLAND: Homosexuality is decriminalised for consenting adults over the age of twenty. However, lesbians are not mentioned in the legislation as lesbianism was never criminalized in the first place – a situation typical in many countries.

Derek Jarman born

British artist, filmmaker, gardener and activist. A significant figure in British gay life during the 1980s. His films consistently had a gay edge to them and a unique style – often also controversial, such as ‘Sebastiane’, a film about St. Sebastiane which contained gay sex and frequent nudity. It caused uproar when broadcast on the fledgling Channel 4. Other films include ‘Jubilee’ ‘Caravaggio’ and ‘Edward II’. Diagnosed with HIV in 1986, Jarman’s work became more overtly political, with a series of painting daubed with ‘Queer’, ‘Blood’, ‘Scream’, and his film ‘Blue’, all of which were intended to show the reality of living with HIV, the anger, fear and lack of public funding. A frequent face on demonstrations, Jarman was deeply anti-establishment and frequently criticised those who were seen to work with those in power – such as **Ian McKellen** when he accepted his knighthood from a Tory government or those involved with the **Stonewall** group. His published diaries ‘Modern Nature’ and ‘Smiling in Slow Motion’ give a unique and powerful insight into life under a homophobic government and the fears and anger brought about by HIV and AIDS. [‘Modern Nature’; ‘Smiling in Slow Motion’ – the diaries of Derek Jarman](#)

Dennis Altman born

Australian scholar and writer. A lecturer in Melbourne, Altman joined the gay liberation movement following a visit to New York in 1970. Shortly afterwards his book [‘Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation’](#) was seen as a defining text in gay liberation and launched Altman as a ‘public homosexual’. He addressed (with Germaine Greer) the opening of Sydney Gay Liberation in 1972, took part in the first gay demos and later the Sydney Mardi Gras. A later book, [‘The Homosexualization of America’](#) looked at the emergence of homosexuals as a new minority and its impact on broader society. He also documented the community response to AIDS in [‘Power and Community: Organizational and Cultural responses to AIDS’](#) (1994)

Rita Mae Brown born American Writer. Produced '[Rubyfruit Jungle](#)', the classic lesbian novel. Also known for her numerous high profile affairs – notably with the first openly lesbian person elected to state legislature, **Elaine Noble** as well as tennis champion **Martina Navratilova**, author Fannie Flagg and socialite Judy Nelson. Co-founded 'The Furies' with **Charlotte Bunch**.

Sue Wills born Australian activist. One of the early leaders of the Australian lesbian and gay movement – especially with the group 'Campaign Against Moral Persecution' (CAMP). She energised the group's interest in the abuse of homosexuals by the psychiatric profession and worked in CAMP's Homosexual Guidance service, which both campaigned and counselled. In later years, Wills worked for the federal government's Royal Commission into Human Relationships, while her PHD thesis. 'The Politics of Sexual Liberation' and the supporting documentation provides an invaluable history of the Australian lesbian and gay movement.

Charlotte Bunch born American activist and writer. Co-founder, with **Rita Mae Brown**, of one of the most influential lesbian feminist groups of the 1970s, 'The Furies', which grew out of the tensions which existed between heterosexual feminists and lesbians. The group dictated the hardline position of lesbian separatism, insisting that feminists must renounce heterosexual privilege and make the political choice to become lesbians. After the group disbanded in 1972, Bunch and Brown founded the influential journal, 'Quest: a feminist quarterly' and joined the national Gay Taskforce in the 1970s.

David Norris born Irish political figure. Challenged the anti-gay legislation which Ireland had inherited from Britain. When he lost in the Irish courts, he took the case to the European Court of Human Rights and judgement was given in his favour in 1988. It was, however, only enacted in 1993 as a procedural device was enacted to avoid politicians damaging their electoral chances by being seen to vote in favour of homosexuality. When it was enacted, Norris refused to support the Bill as it included other items, including increasing the penalties on prostitutes, as he believed he 'could not accept my liberation without murmur at the expense of the victimisation of another vulnerable group'. Prior to this, Norris had also managed to successfully amend the Incitement to Hatred Act (which made it illegal to incite hatred against certain groups) to include sexual orientation.

Armistead Maupin born American writer. In 1976, Maupin began a daily serial in the San Francisco Chronicle, and its eventual popularity developed into a series of international bestsellers, '[Tales of the City](#)'. While appealing to a cross section of society, Maupin's gay and lesbian characters came across as real and truly affected their readership, both gay and straight – opening up new experiences and people to a hooked audience. Maupin was also responsible for 'outing' Rock Hudson.

Aubrey Walter born In 1964, Walter met his life-long partner, David Fernbach, at a Young Communist League meeting. After becoming involved in CND, Walter toured the U.S. to make links with radical groups there – especially the newly formed **Gay Liberation Front (GLF)**. At one of their meetings he met **Bob Mellors**, a student from England and on their return to London they called a meeting to found the London GLF. Walter was leader of the GLF in its three year existence and began their newsletter 'Come Together'. After working as a teacher, Walter, with David Fernbach and Richard Dipple founded the **Gay Men's Press** in 1979

John Pegge born South African activist. In the early 1980s, Pegge, alongside Gordon Isaacs, started a gay support group called GASA-6010 which initiated HIV education when the first cases of HIV were reported in SA around 1983. Despite homosexuality being illegal, Pegge managed to get condoms from the Department of Health. By 1985, Pegge and others had begun a campaign to alert the whole of SA society to HIV/AIDS. Despite their national and international lobbying, their voices fell on deaf ears.

1945

The Second World War ends: the full horror of the Holocaust is revealed.

Soon after taking office in 1933, Hitler banned all gay and lesbian groups and had the vast library at the Institute of Sexual Science burned. Mass arrests of gay men began in 1934, with prisoners being sent to concentration camps, all bearing the Pink Triangle. Although figures are vague, it is estimated that between 10 – 15,000 gay men were imprisoned. (Typically, the number of lesbian prisoners remains hidden, as only gay men were named in anti-gay legislation and lesbians, it was felt, posed no threat to the Nazis – indeed, it was felt that they could be used for breeding the 'new race') Some gay men were subject to experimentation: attempts were made to turn them straight. As well as this, many couldn't rely on the support of other groups within the camps. Often they were given the hardest work to do. There are few figures, names or faces of the gay men held. Fewer than 15 have since come forward to speak of their experiences – for, once the horrors of the camps were over, they still had to face a hostile world. One survivor who told his tale was Karl Goral, whose story is told on ['The Men with the Pink Triangle' by Heinz Heger](#)

Joseph Douce born

French cleric. Becoming aware of his homosexuality aged ten, Douce entered the local seminary aged 16 but left in 1967, becoming a Baptist, which he felt gave him more freedom. Becoming a Minister, Douce studied psychology and sexology in Amsterdam and on 10 October 1976 founded the Centre of Christ the Liberator (CCL) in Paris. A church which, he believed, would administer to gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites and sadomasochists, he stated the aims of the church were 'to give immediate pastoral, psychological, medical and legal aid to sexual minorities'. On 19 July 1990, two policemen arrived at his door and took him away for questioning. He never returned, his body being found on 17 October. The murder has never been fully explained, nor has the truth behind the 'policemen' who took him away. The CCL survives and is now affiliated to the **Metropolitan Community Church**.

Jeffrey Weeks born

British academic. Responsible for numerous books and articles around the issues of sexuality and its relation to and position within society. ['Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present' \(1977\)](#) is seen as a pioneering and authoritative work in gay history. Other works include ['Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1880' \(1980\)](#); ['Sexuality and Its Discontents: Meanings, myths and Modern Sexualities' \(1985\)](#) and ['Between the Acts: Lives of Homosexual Men 1885 – 1967' \(1990\)](#)

1946

Guy Hocquengham born

French writer and activist. While Hocquengham took part in left wing politics and the student riots of 1968, he eventually became disillusioned with the homophobia of the traditional left and joined FHAR (Front Homosexuel d'Action Revolutionnaire). FHAR, taking Women's Liberation as its starting point, was founded by lesbians to agitate for lesbian and gay rights. Hocquengham coordinated the infamous issue 12 of 'Tout', a left wing newspaper. That issue reported on the sexual revolution and contained 4 pages on homosexuality. The government seized the paper on charges of obscenity, but it was later acquitted. In 1972, the magazine published Hocquengham's life story and he became a public figure as a spokesperson for the new generation of French homosexuals. While FHAR was the radical inspiration for a generation, Hocquengham increasingly distanced himself from the group, criticising the new gay consumerism in 1977; the demand for legal protection (which would become the 'herald of new repressions') and his former left-wing colleagues, whom he believed became the 'new middle class of the 1980s'. His most important work was ['Le Desire Homosexuel' \(Homosexual Desire\) \(1972\)](#) where he proposed promiscuity and that a focus on the anus (as opposed to the penis) in sex would lead to the collapse of the 'phallic hierarchy' and the conflicts between the individual and society.

Michelle Cliff born

Jamaican-American-British writer. Focussing on race, gender, class and sexuality Cliff published and wrote for the lesbian-feminist journal 'Sinister Wisdom' from 1981 - 1983. As well as novels Cliff also wrote polemic, notably her anthology ['Bodies of Water'](#) which looked at the queer world head on and resulted in her being lauded as a powerful critic of the entrenched homophobia of the Caribbean region.

Vito Russo born

American writer and film historian. Whilst working in film distribution in the early 1970s, Russo got involved with Gay Activist's Alliance (GAA) and began showing 'gay films' in 1971. Through this he became interested in the portrayal of lesbians and gays in the cinema, culminating in the book, ['The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies' \(1981\)](#). Hugely influential, the book exposed how homosexuality had been treated Hollywood.

Jonathan Mann born American Epidemiologist, doctor and human rights activist. Formed the global program on AIDS within the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1987. Having worked in the AIDS field in Zaire, Mann was perfectly placed for this task, wishing to present the human face of the disease and to solicit responses to it from international leaders. Via the program, Mann sought to counter the stigmatisation of affected communities and to appeal to governments to look beyond negative stereotypes in their combative methods, especially in relation to gay men. He also made explicit the human rights aspect of the disease, the inequalities of medical treatment between rich and poor nations and fought for global human rights for those people discriminated against on the basis of AIDS.

1947

USA: The Kinsey Institute makes its first report on sexuality

For the first time, a mass produced and widely read document states the prevalence of homosexuality in society. Although often criticised and challenged, the figures showed that homosexuals are far more prevalent in society than was previously believed: 37% of respondents stated that they had had homo-sex to orgasm, while 13% of males stated that they responded emotionally towards other men after adolescence.

1948

BRITAIN: Roberta Cowell has gender-corrective surgery.

Identified as male at birth, Cowell served in WW2 and subsequently married and had children. However, following a period of depression Cowell was diagnosed as 'intersexed' and given the choice of living as a man or a woman. She chose the feminine and gave up her career as an engineer to train as a seamstress and gas gender corrective surgery in 1951. Unlike Christine Jorgensen, however, Cowell didn't become a cause celebre and led a relatively quiet life. Her autobiography is an important document as she takes great pains to distinguish between trans- and homosexuality: 'I was never either a transvestite or a homosexual, my inclinations were normal, simply died, then when they appeared again, they were re-orientated. By this time I was the opposite sex anyway, so still was not homosexual.' The book is also important because Cowell clearly states (and presents supporting evidence) that she was legally able to change her name and gender – a case which was used in the fight for gender recognition in the 1990s/2000s. □ The use of 'polari', a coded language is used in homosexual circles – see Appendix Two for a glossary of terms

1951

USA: The Mattachine Society is founded

Founded by **Harry Hay** and Dale Jennings, Mattachine was originally a Marxist group set up to deal with the homosexual community as a minority. However, under the McCarthy anti-communist witch-hunts, the group changed its aims to become a group intent on assimilating homosexuals into straight society. Groups sprang up throughout the US and did much lobbying of politicians. They also set up their own magazine, ONE Inc, which had a circulation of around 5,000 – a vital and important early communication network for homosexuals. However, the arrival of the more radical Gay Liberation Front put paid to their work, as many felt their assimilationist perspective outmoded.

1952

BRITAIN:

In 1938, there were 134 prosecutions for sodomy, 822 for attempted sodomy and 320 for gross indecency. By 1952 this had increased to 670 for sodomy, 3087 for attempted sodomy and 1686 for gross indecency.

Svend Robinson born

Canadian politician. In 1988, he revealed on television that he was gay – becoming the first federal member of parliament to come out in Canada. Although elected to Parliament in 1979, he believed his sexuality would not be acceptable to constituents. Despite conservative attempts to use the rumours around his sexuality against him, Robinson consistently spoke up on issues of sexuality albeit from within the closet. By 1988, he was so convinced that the opposition were gunning for him that he decided to come clean. Since then he has attained hero status amongst the Canadian LGBT community for his willingness to identify with community activism while working within the constraints of parliament.

1952

Peter Tatchell born

British activist. Born in Australia, Tatchell moved to the UK in 1971 where he joined the fledgling Gay Liberation Front. In 1983, he fought the Bermondsey bi-election as the official Labour candidate, but attacks by the opposition and the tabloids based around his sexuality meant he lost the election. After campaigning against the introduction of Section 28, Tatchell and others set up 'Outrage!', a group based around direct action. Some of their tactics, such as protesting at Westminster Abbey over the Church of England's attitudes to sexuality brought the wrath of the press (which were eventually to dub him 'public enemy number one') as well as some within the LGBT community. Similarly, his outspoken thoughts and ideas on such matters as the age of consent have split his natural constituency. In recent years, Tatchell has focussed on human rights in general, notably his public embarrassment (and attempted citizen's arrest) of Robert Mugabe (which caused the tabloids to give him grudging praise) and the campaign to have homophobic dancehall records and acts banned (which resulted in death threats). Tatchell's strength of conviction and willingness to (literally) put him on the front line have shown him to be courageous and determined and a major influence both on the LGBT community and the political landscape.

Bogdan Lesnik born

Slovenian activist. Together with Aldo Ivancic organised an exhibition of gay and lesbian press from around the world and eventually this turned into an annual 'Magnus' festival' which later became the Ljubljana Gay and Lesbian film festival. Later 'Magnus' was created, a group for the 'socialisation of homosexuality through culture' which in turn prompted the setting up 'LL', a lesbian organisation. The work of Magnus and its links with other 'marginalized' groups helped change Slovenian attitudes towards homosexuality.

Mario Mieli born

Italian Writer and activist. In 1971, Mieli travelled to London and joined the Gay Liberation Front, while back in Milan he founded one of the first Italian gay rights groups, FUORI! (OUT!, or Fronte Universale Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano). Later he joined COM (Collectivi Omosessuale Milanesi) and began his thesis which was eventually published in 1976. A groundbreaking work, 'Elementi di Critica Omosessuale' was acute and accurate in its assessment of why society represses homosexuality. With his outrageous personality and formidable intellect, Mieli was at the forefront of Italian gay liberation and his work and memory live on in the Circolo Mario Mieli, Rome's largest lesbian and gay organisation. Diagnosed with schizophrenia, Mieli committed suicide in 1978.

1953

USA:

Police arrest thirty men in an eight day period when watching the comings and goings in the Atlanta public library toilet. They were charged with engaging in homosexual acts and faced with heavy fines and up to ten years in prison. Newspapers printed the names and addresses of all the men at least six times. All except one man lost their jobs.

1954

BRITAIN:

The Lord Chancellor claims that during his time as a Judge, in 1929 – 1932, as many as 95% of blackmail cases he heard were founded on allegations of homosexuality

Cleve Jones born

American activist, co-founder of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and originator of the NAMES project memorial quilt. After the murder of **Harvey Milk** and Mayor George Moscone in 1978, James commemorated the act each year with a candlelight march. By 1985, with the AIDS toll rising, Jones asked people to bring placards with the names of victims on each. From above the crowd Jones saw the placards as a quilt, and the idea was born. The quilt consists of 3 foot by 6 foot panels sewn together by friends, family and loved ones of a victim of AIDS. Its first public display was at the 'National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights' in 1987. 1920 panels were displayed. By 1998, this had risen to 8,000. Considered the largest community arts project in the world, there are 44 branches of the project in the US, with a further 39 internationally. It is believed some 9 million people worldwide have viewed the quilt.

USA: 'Daughters of Bilitis' is formed

1955

In September 1955, **Phyllis Lyon** and **Dorothy Martin** along with three other lesbian couples sought out an alternative to the lesbian bar culture which was prone to police harassment and the dangers of alcohol abuse. Choosing the name 'Daughters of Bilitis' after Pierre Louy's poem about Sappho, the first meeting was held on 19 October 1955 and grew slowly, eventually changing from a secret society to one intent on education and promotion. This caused some members to leave as they preferred a society for socialising in secret. By 1956, the group had its own magazine, 'The Ladder' which had a circulation of about 1,000 by 1960 – a small figure but as these were undoubtedly passed on from person to person, the readership was probably higher. The group, despite charges of conservatism, was undoubtedly the first known lesbian civil rights group and it must be acknowledged that it was founded in a period of great repression. Indeed, the group, despite conservative aims ('to allow lesbians to 'adjust to society' and not the other way round), did vital work helping isolated lesbians in matters of concern: employment, marriage, child custody etc. By the mid sixties, Lyon and Martin became disillusioned with the growing gay pressure groups, feeling them to be male dominated. As this occurred and a new generation of activist became more radical, so 'Daughters of Bilitis' began to wither. By 1970 many local groups disbanded and in 1972 'The Ladder' ceased production. The importance and influence of this group cannot be overestimated.

Martina Navratilova born

1956

Czech-American athlete. Born in Czechoslovakia, Navratilova gained US asylum in 1975. She declared herself bisexual at the time, despite sexuality being a sole reason for not granting citizenship and homosexuality being illegal in many states. She won her first professional tennis championship in 1974 and her first Wimbledon title in 1978. She also holds the record for 166 singles titles, and 163 doubles titles. She has also won 54 Grand Slam titles in singles, mixed and doubles. Her first major affair was with **Rita Mae Brown**, but it was the presence of Judy Nelson in Navratilova's 'box' in the French open and at Wimbledon in 1984 which increased the rumours of her lesbianism. Her scientific approach to tennis and her dedication to fitness and athleticism meant the press harped on about her 'manly' body – a homophobic euphemism about her lesbianism. Navratilova is a significant lesbian of the century with her high profile, success and challenges to ideology about women in sport. She bore the phobias, prejudice and stereotypes of lesbianism, defeating them all with her success. Her prominence undoubtedly brought about a change in attitude towards lesbians, as well as showing the options which were available to lesbians.

Simon Tseko Nkoli born

1957

South African activist. Born in Soweto, Nkoli became an activist against apartheid before joining the mainly white Gay Association of South Africa (GASA). After coming out in an interview in 'City Press', he formed the first black gay group in Africa. After speaking at rallies to support rent boycotts in the Vaal townships, Nkoli was arrested with 21 other political leaders and faced the death penalty. However, by maintaining his gay identity while a prisoner, he helped to change the attitude to gay rights of the African National Congress. Released from prison in 1988 following letters of support from gay groups around the world (although the GASA refused to support him as he was a political prisoner) he founded the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW). He was one of the first gay leaders to meet with President Mandela. Becoming one of the first publicly HIV positive African gay men, Nkoli helped establish the Soweto Township AIDS project and worked on educational programmes there. Nkoli died on 30 November 1998.

GERMANY: attempt to repeal 1871 anti-gay legislation

'Paragraph 175' of German law made male homosexuality illegal. The attempt to repeal the law (as part of the attempt to rid Germany of its Nazi past) was defeated as the paragraph was originally introduced in 1871 and therefore deemed not specifically Nazi (although they did strengthen the legislation). Indeed, at the time it was stated that the law was necessary as a protection for the German people.

1957

BRITAIN: The Homosexual Law Reform Society forms

Following the publication of the Wolfenden Report, which proposed legalising homosexuality, Dr. R D Reid wrote to the Spectator to call for a society to help the victims of police entrapment. A E Dyson had a similar letter published in The Times, supported by 33 signatories, including Lord Atlee, Bertrand Russell and Angus Wilson. This rallied Wolfenden's supporters and on 12 May the Homosexual Law Reform Society (HLRS) was formed. Most of the original members were not homosexual. Later the Albany Trust was founded as a charity to counsel LGBT people. One of their first documents was 'Homosexuals and the Law' which was distributed prior to the first debate on the Wolfenden Report, but it had little initial impact. The groups first public meeting attracted over 1,000 people at a time when homosexuality was illegal. The atmosphere of secrecy impacted upon the work of the group – so much so that many in the group shuddered at the idea of Anthony Grey becoming the Secretary of the group in 1962 – as a gay man who lived openly with another man, he could attract the police's attention. Their major contribution was around the campaign for the Sexual Offences Act of 1967 which legalised homosexuality. Unfortunately, the weaknesses of the law (**see 1967 for further details**) rubbed off on the HLRS and the later emergence of the radical Gay Liberation Front saw the HLRS fade from view. Once again, however, this group is an important step for LGBT rights and support in the UK

1959

Jeanette Winterson born

British writer. Despite her penchant for self-publicity and self belief which has often put readers and reviewers off her work ('No-one working in the English language now comes close to my exuberance, my passion, my fidelity to words'), Winterson has attracted a fiercely loyal following and grudging admiration. It is, perhaps, for '[Oranges are Not the Only Fruit](#)' which Winterson is best known. A semi-autobiographical tale of a young girl growing up in a northern English town and her lesbian awakening inspired and enthralled many. The BBC TV production of the book is also an important landmark in British television, depicting lesbian sex at a time of increasing repression of the LGBT community by a Tory government (it came a couple of years after the introduction of Section 28). While the book and play use a backdrop of traditional northern images (a mill town, religion, busy body old women, youth trying to escape) it also depicted a new, determined pride in LGBT people: we would no longer settle for second best, despite all society could throw at us.

BRITAIN: 127 gay men are questioned about being 'out' in society.

31% state they are 'very secret'; 32% state their sexuality is known only to other homosexuals; 21% state they are 'out only to 'close friends' and 13% considered themselves to be identifiably homosexual to anyone.

1960

Greg Louganis born

American athlete. Gymnast and diver, Louganis competed in his first Olympics aged 16. He won Olympic gold for both diving and springboard in the 1984 Olympics, repeating the feat in 1988. At the 1994 Gay Games he officially came out and in 1995 on the 'Barbara Walters Show' came out again – this time as HIV+. While these actions may have lost him lucrative product endorsements, his brave move gave inspiration and support to many around the world, be they gay or living with HIV.

BRITAIN: 'Coronation Street' Begins

The longest running soap-opera (and one of the longest running programmes) in the UK is created by a gay man, Tony Warren, who writes many of the early episodes himself and creates the early characters who have since become icons as well as templates for every other character to grace the Street's cobbles. The programme also revolutionised British television, bringing recognisable working class characters to our screens for the first time and introducing a new, modern form of drama which changed our viewing forever. '[I was Ena Sharples Father](#)' – Tony Warren

HUNGARY: homosexuality legalised**1961****BRITAIN: 'Victim' released in cinemas**

A landmark film, in which Dirk Bogarde took the brave step of shirking his matinee idol image to play a lawyer blackmailed over a homosexual affair. The film brought to light to reality of the threat of blackmail which many homosexuals faced. It is believed that the film may have influenced the legalisation of homosexuality in 1967.

CUBA: Two years after Castro's revolution, the first massive roundup of homosexuals takes place.

This is the first attack on gays in Cuba. From 1965 – 1968, thousands of gay men are imprisoned in work camps. These camps are eventually closed (due to Gay activist protests to the United Nations) but for gay people, a life of secrecy and fear still existed. During the 1980s the regime placed those with HIV/AIDS in quarantine, arguing that public health came above human rights. However, things are slowly changing in the country. In 1994, Cuba held its first Gay Pride celebration, declaring 'For the first time we have consciously gathered here in unity. Being afraid can only help the ideas of our detractors. Being afraid is absurd if we want to defend our rights. It is necessary to act proudly, to make a daring gesture. It is necessary to act with courage.'

BRITAIN: The North West Homosexual Law Reform Committee founded**1964**

Despite the existence of the Homosexual Law Reform Society (which was felt to be too London based), Allan Horsfall and Colin Harvey set up the first regional grass groups campaign group. A miner, Horsfall simply printed up 1,000 leaflets advertising their first meeting which went to social groups and the press. The local paper printed a headline about the meeting but despite this there was little or no protest. They also attempted to set up a social group in Burnley using a local assembly hall, but this time the church and even local doctors set up opposition – resulting in the plans being axed. The group (which would change its name eventually to the Campaign for Homosexual Equality) would play a large role in campaigning for the legalisation of homosexuality which would eventually occur in 1967.

Roberta Close born

Brazilian hermaphrodite and male-to-female transsexual. Born in Rio de Janeiro Close was brought up as a male. In her teens she began to dress in female attire and gained notoriety at gay events. However, with her beauty, Close quickly became a celebrity and would become an icon of Brazilian culture. Becoming internationally famous as a model, Close had gender corrective surgery in 1989. Now living in Switzerland, Close longed to return to Brazil and waged a long battle with the Brazilian authorities to be allowed to change her identity documents to reflect her female status. By now her trans status was well known, with one US newspaper running the headline 'The World's most beautiful model is a man.' Despite all this Close's notoriety and fame opened up discussions around gender identity and sexuality, while also highlighting the position of many trans people in Brazil who become 'travesti' (taking hormones and injecting silicone to become more female in appearance, many paying for this via prostitution – something which Close strenuously denies she took part in).

ENGLAND AND WALES: Male Homosexuality is legalised**1967**

Despite six previous attempts to either repeal or amend the **Labouchere Amendment (1885)** since 1958, a Labour party victory at the last election brought about a change in attitude by Parliament. This signalled the time to reintroduce legislation and Lord Arran introduced a bill in the Lords while Leo Abse MP introduced an identical bill in the Commons. The Commons passed the Bill by 244 votes to 100 against and on 27 July 1967 homosexuality was legalised, albeit for two males over the age of 21, consenting in private. It certainly wasn't perfect. The age of consent was higher than for that for heterosexuals. The laws did not affect Scotland or Northern Ireland. There was still inequality in the age of consent. Some of its words were restrictive, for example the term 'in private' wasn't deemed to mean away from public view, for somewhere such as a locked hotel room was deemed to be a public space and so gay men could be prosecuted all the same. Other legislation still remained too, such as that governing sexual offences. However, despite all this, the law signalled a sea-change in the attitudes of parliament and reflected the changing attitudes of society – even if the law was granted grudgingly by some parliamentarians who now believed that gay men had got what they wanted and should now shut up: Lord Arran, who promoted the Bill in the Lords, finished his speech thus: 'Homosexuals must continue to remember that, while there may be nothing bad in being homosexual, there is certainly nothing good.'

1968

USA: **Orange County:** A man loses his house and car insurance after a neighbour reports seeing him kissing another man in his garden and reports this to his insurance company. **New York:** Arrests of gay men by decoy policemen in cruising areas drops from around 100 per week to virtually zero after the **Mattachine Society** of New York lobbies Mayor John Lindsay to issue an executive order forbidding the police from arresting for 'homosexual solicitation' without a signed citizen's complaint. **San Diego:** 75 men are arrested during a 3 week swoop on parks and beaches looking for homosexual activities. **Metropolitan Community Church formed** Troy Perry, who was thrown out of Protestant churches because of his homosexuality, set up the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) as a church primarily for LGBT people, but which welcomes all. With denominations all over the world, the church works in many areas, including AIDS counselling and political activism. In 'The Christian Century' in 1996, Perry stated 'If you had told me 28 years ago that the largest organization in the world touching the lives of lesbian and gay people would be a church, I would not have believed you. So many members of the lesbian and gay community feel that they have had violence done to them by religious groups that it is very difficult to evangelise any members of our community. But we do not evangelise.'

BULGARIA: homosexuality is legalised for those over the age of 21.

EAST GERMANY: homosexuality is legalised for those over the age of 21

1969

SCOTLAND: the Scottish Minorities Group (SMG) is formed

DENMARK: An attempt is made to legalise gay marriage. It fails.

POLAND: Homosexuality is legalised.

WEST GERMANY: Homosexuality is legalised for those aged 21 and over

USA: Feminists confront Lesbians

Betty Friedan, one of the originators of the feminist movement (and author of landmark feminist text, 'The Feminine Mystique') calls lesbians a threat to the women's movement. As founder of the 'National Organisation of Women' (NOW), Friedan labelled lesbians 'the lavender menace' and in response a resolution at the organisation's convention was withdrawn as being too controversial. On the opening night of the convention, 25 lesbians with the tag 'lavender menace' emblazoned on t-shirts took to the stage in protest. A year later, the resolution was finally passed.

1969

USA: The Stonewall Riots/formation of the Gay Liberation Front

Possibly THE landmark in the modern gay rights movement, the few nights of rioting at the Stonewall Inn in New York sent shockwaves around the world and initiated the modern gay community and gay activism as we know it.

The Stonewall Inn was a small bar in New York's Greenwich Village, frequented by a mixed crowd of gay men, lesbians and trans people, blacks, Puerto Ricans and other races who mixed easily with prostitutes and rent boys. Frequently hassled by the New York City Police, with many arrests made, on the night of June 28 the police once again raided the bar. In plain-clothes, they intended to use laws such as those forbidding same-sex dancing to persecute the patrons. Requesting the 200 or so customers to line up for identification, the patrons began to pose and camp it up. However, when a police wagon arrived to take those arrested away, the patrons turned on their persecutors. All hell broke loose. The police attacked violently, while the queers from the bar fought for their lives. Word spread to surrounding streets and bars and the numbers swelled to over 400. Only a few were arrested, but the anger and defiance at the police act swept people along.

The following day a sign on the boarded up Stonewall windows read: 'They invaded our rights; support gay power – C'mon girls, gay prohibition corrupts; Cops feeds Mafia; Inspector Smyth looted our: money, jukebox, cigarette machine, telephones, safe, cash register and the boy's tips. LEGALISE GAY BARS AND STOP THE PROBLEM.

Later that night, thousands filled the streets, chanting 'GAY POWER!' The protestors again fought back when the police attacked and they began to engage in public displays of defiance against homophobic laws – kissing and holding hands in public. Incidents and protests continued until the next Wednesday. But it was enough. The message had reverberated not only throughout New York but throughout America and the rest of the world. No longer would LGBT people stand back and take whatever society and authority would dish out. It was time to fight back and claim our human rights. From this event the **Gay Liberation Front (GLF)** was born and spread around the world. The personal became the political and LGBT people began to fight back. It was, as someone once said, 'the hairpin drop heard around the world'

Following the Stonewall riots, a number of people got together to form the **GLF**. A radical group, they intended to use radical methods of achieving their aims, which were far reaching and linked with other groups: 'Gay Liberation is a revolutionary group of homosexual women and men formed with the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about until existing social institutions are abolished.'. While many older LGBT people found their rhetoric disturbing, many found it invigorating and at one with the revolutionary ideas in the air: women's lib, black power etc.

Many visiting radicals liked what they saw and within a few months cells had grown up around America and the world. They produced their own newspaper, 'Come Out!', pamphlets and sponsored demonstrations and dances. They allied with and marched in unison with Women's groups and Black Groups. While the groups (in most countries) would last only a couple of years before splitting due to ideological differences, the GLF was the first child of Stonewall and its influence and inspiration and theirs and future generations cannot be underestimated. '[Stonewall](#)' – [Martin Duberman](#)

1970

LONDON: The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) formed

Following a visit to the US and the impression left upon them by the newly formed GLF, Bob Mellors and Aubrey Walter return to London and form the GLF there. Nineteen people (18 men and 1 woman) attend the first meeting. They create a list of demands which were published in the GLF magazine 'Come Together'. Their overriding principle was visibility and action. Whenever members were out and about they were encouraged to 'flaunt' their homosexuality. One of their first demonstrations was at Highbury Fields where a man had been arrested for 'indecent'. Other groups sprang up all over the UK. Like their US counterpart, the GLF looked at linking up all forms of oppression and sought to create a revolution in society which would ultimately lead to freedom for all. However, the group eventually began to drift apart after three years. During that time, thought, they brought light to darkened years and opened the door for a future generations to follow. ['Come Together: the Years of Gay Liberation 1970 – 1973' – Aubrey Walter](#); ['No Bath but Plenty of Bubbles: an oral history of the GLF 1970 – 1973' – Lisa Power](#)

US: The US Civil Service Commission tries to get rid of a San Franciscan postal worker for 'Moral Incompetency'. He eventually gets his job back. The Los Angeles Times finally bows to pressure from activists and agrees to use the term 'homosexual' over other derogatory terms. **Huey Newton, Leader of the radical black rights organisation 'The Black Panthers' issues a statement of solidarity with the lesbian and gay movement:** '...we say that we recognise the woman's right to be free. We haven't said much about the homosexual at all and we must relate to the homosexual movement because it is a real movement. And I know through reading and through my life experience, my observation, that homosexuals are not given freedom and liberty by anyone in this society. Maybe they might be the most oppressed people in the society...we should be careful about using terms which might turn our friends off. The terms 'faggot' and 'punk' should be deleted from our vocabulary and especially we should not attach names normally designed for homosexuals to men who are enemies of the people, such as Nixon or Mitchell. Homosexuals are not enemies of the people...'

SWITZERLAND: The club for lesbians, 'Minerva' is formed.

1970

FINLAND: legalises homosexuality

AUSTRIA: legalises homosexuality for those age 18 and over

BRITAIN: first Gay Pride march

Although not labelled as such, 28 August saw the first 'Gay Day' in Hyde Park, in London, followed by a march to Trafalgar Square, nominally to protest at the age of consent. 'The Times' covered the event, recording 500 marchers, while 'Time Out' stated the number as 1,000.

US: Proposed legislation in Texas would make it illegal for a man to have sex with a dog but not another man. It fails. Bert Chapman of Howell, Michigan, is released from prison. He had been arrested in 1940 for an alleged homosexual 'offence' and was confined as a 'criminal homosexual psychopath' for 31 years. **NEW YORK:** in the largest lesbian and gay march so far, 3,000 march on the New York State Capitol to demand lesbian and gay civil rights.

NORWAY: legalises homosexuality for those aged 17 and over

1972

HAWAII: homosexuality is legalised.

BRITAIN: 'Gay News' is launched.

While periodicals had been published in the UK for many years – 'Jeremy', 'Spartacus' to name two - 'Gay News' was different: a newspaper, not a fashion/porn supplement, which covered serious issues. Formed by a collective, eventually Denis Lemon would become sole editor and take the magazine through the next ten years, to 1981. It didn't last much longer after his departure, but paved the way for 'Gay Times' which is still going strong today The House of Lords rule that gay personal ads constitute a 'conspiracy to corrupt public morals'

USA: It is revealed that the American Gay Liberation Front is monitored by the Secret Service in an effort to 'prevent political assassination' The New York policy of forcing known homosexual cab drivers to undergo regular psychiatric tests is dropped after demonstrations

BRITAIN: Gay Switchboard set up.

1973

Realising there was a need for advice and support to be given to isolated lesbian and gay people, the **Gay Liberation Front** in London set up Switchboard to help those in need. Staffed by volunteers, the switchboard became a lifeline to lesbians and gays coming to terms with their sexuality and facing homophobia in all its forms. Following the death of the GLF, their building was donated to the Switchboard . It proved to be a template for switchboards up and down the country and still serves as a lifeline to this day, thanks mainly to the dedicated volunteers who give their time to help their community.

MALTA: legalises homosexuality for those aged 18 and above

USA: The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses The National Bisexual Liberation Movement begins. In Oregon, a teacher is sacked because she is a lesbian. On Appeal, the judge ruled such an act unconstitutional. A further appeal by the state was won, and the teacher's final attempt at victory was over ruled when the Supreme Court refused to hear her appeal.

WEST GERMANY:

Reduces the age of consent for homosexuals to 18 (event though it is 14 for heterosexuals)

USA: Elaine Noble becomes the first openly lesbian or gay candidate to win electoral office at the state level. Missouri lawmakers propose legislation branding homosexuality a disease and requiring gays to report themselves for listing at the state health department. It fails. Kathy Kozachenko becomes the first openly gay person to be elected to public office in America: the Ann Arbour City Council

1974

CHILE:

The right-wing junta begins a terror campaign against homosexuals: including castration, rape, torture and the public display of gay's dead bodies.

1975

USA: First proposal for national gay rights legislation

Although not lesbian, Bella Abzug has long fought for lesbian and gay rights and women's issues. In 1975, she and 23 other sponsors introduced 'H.R. 5452', known as the Civil Rights Amendments of 1975, the first proposed national gay rights legislation in US history. Its aim was to end discrimination on the basis of 'affectional or sexual preference'. The bill failed to pass but has been introduced in every session of congress since then. US Civil Service Commission drops its ban on lesbians and gays from federal public jobs.

BRITAIN: A survey by 'Gay News' reveals that 45% of people believe that certain occupations such as doctors and teachers should not be open to homosexuals

AUSTRALIA: South Australia becomes the first Australian state to legalise sex between consenting males.

1977

BRITAIN: Mary Whitehouse sues 'Gay News' for obscenity.

A self appointed guardian of public 'morals', Mary Whitehouse had long campaigned against the 'filth' on television and what she saw as the corruption of moral values. In 1977, she invoked an ancient British blasphemy law to take legal action against the London paper 'Gay News' which had printed 'The Loves that Dares to Speak Its Name', a poem by James Kirkup. The poem depicts a sexual relationship between a Roman centurion and the crucified body of Christ. The case drew national attention and polarised much opinion. In July, a London Jury found the paper and its editor, Denis Lemon guilty. Both were fined and Lemon was given a suspended sentence. An appeal in 1978 was dismissed. The fear of prosecution over this poem raised its head again in 2002 when, during a BBC series on censorship, Joan Bakewell risked prosecution for reading some of the same poem on air. Despite mutterings, the fears were unwarranted, although they did provoke a public demonstration against censorship.

MONRENEGRO: homosexuality legalised for those aged 14 or over.

US: Anita Bryant spearheads fight against pro-gay legislation

'As American as Apple Pie', Anita Bryant was a beauty queen and singer who, in 1977, became embroiled in one of the most bitter battles in US gay history. In Miami a law had been passed to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual or affectional preference. However, before it was enacted, Bryant's Baptists pastor, William Chapman, encouraged his congregation to actively fight the law. Bryant and others formed the 'Save Our Children' (SOC) group to repeal the ordinance. Bryant was president of the group. The effort was successful and was attributed to Bryant's involvement because of her status as a singer and for the number of products which she endorsed on public television advertisements. Following the repeal gay rights activists organised boycotts of the products she endorsed, notably 'Florida Orange Juice.'. While sales didn't suffer the acts highlighted her controversial position and she began to lose contracts.

Her legacy lived on for a number of years, however, with a number of other states successfully repealing or opposing pro-gay rights legislation. States included Minnesota, Wichita and Oregon. A survey reveals that 80% of doctors in Oregon state that they would refuse to treat known homosexuals. The US Inland Revenue drops a rule which states that, in order to get tax exempt charity status, gay educational or charity groups must state that homosexuality is 'a sickness, disturbance or diseased pathology.'

SWEDEN: Age of consent for homosexuals is reduced to 15 for EVERYONE.

1978

USA: The murder of Harvey Milk

Milk was a respected politician in San Francisco, elected to public office in 1977, being one of the first 'out' politicians to do so in the U.S. He had a strong core of voters in the gay community as well as other minorities and the trade union movement. His successes included fighting the anti-gay referendum initiated by John Briggs in 1978. In November 1978, both he and the Mayor of the city, George Moscone, were murdered by a former supervisor, Dan White – a right wing politician who stood against most things which the two victims stood for. The murders shocked the gay community, shock which later turned to anger when White received a modest sentence for 'manslaughter.' The anger turned into the 'White Night' riots. [Randy Shilts](#) in his book about Milk, '[The Mayor of Castro Street](#)' said of the man: 'Milk was a gay leader who talked about hope, struggled for his political successes against the odds, and won...that Harvey Milk's killer should be an all-American boy and ex-cop added poetic embellishment to this tale, for the thousands who had come to revere Harvey Milk as a martyr knew all too well that hating homosexuals is a solid part of the all-American ethos.'

BRITAIN: Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister

1979

Along with Ronald Reagan (who became President of the US in 1981), Thatcher ushered in a dark period for gay rights. While the gains of the 1970s may have been small, things appeared to be moving forward. Thatcher tried to end that. While gay rights wasn't a rallying call during her elections, she always held a hatred of the progressive policies of left wing groups and, along with trade unions, attempted to crush them. It is also important to note that the homophobic tabloid press aided and abetted her crimes.

At a Tory party conference she denounced the 'fact' that 'children who need to be taught to respect traditional values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay'. This was followed up by the first piece of successful anti-gay legislation to be enacted since 1869: Section 28. Her time in power also saw a rise in the homophobic attitudes of the general public. The British Social Attitudes Survey recorded 62% of respondents disapproving of gay relationships in 1983. By 1985 this has risen to 69% and rose again to 74% in 1987

And yet...Thatcher's time saw a rise in militancy and determination in the LGBT community which had never been seen before. Massive demonstrations took place against Section 28 in London and Manchester, with high profile support from media stars and politicians. Lesbians invaded the House of Lords and even the BBC Six O'Clock news. LGBT people were angry and determined to fight the power. Even more importantly, this feeling of strength and unity meant that during a time when it was forbidden for young people to hear about or discuss gay issues during the lifetime of the Section, we have seen the growth and development of a generation of LGBT youth who are more aware, defiant and proud than ever before...

USA:

The first March on Washington for lesbian and gay rights attracts more than 100,000.

SCOTLAND: Homosexuality is legalised

1980

While homosexuality was legalised in England and Wales in 1967, in Scotland it was still illegal. In 1969 The Scottish Minorities Group (SMG) was set up to campaign around making their laws equitable. It would be a long fight which would lead to the European Courts. The British Government, sensing a long fight which would probably lead to an equitable law anyway, conceded and stated it would not oppose such a proposal from Scotland. Robin Cooke was persuaded to table an amendment to the 1979 Criminal Justice Bill and history was made...

BRITAIN: 'A Change of Sex' is broadcast on the BBC

Following the journey of Julia Grant from male to female, the programme showed the full pain, determination and despair felt by trans people. It was a landmark piece of television, showing a trans person with determination, bravery and guts to fight for their rights, and for once showed a trans person as a complete person who was determined not to become a victim (despite the shocking levels of condescension and hostility by a 'leading' trans doctor. A follow up programme was made in 1994. '[Just Julia](#)' – [Julia Grant](#)

1981

USA:

The Centre for Disease Control announces that 5 previously healthy gay men in Los Angeles had been diagnosed with Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia (PCP) The first news article on AIDS is published in the gay paper 'New York Native: 'Disease Rumors Largely Unfounded'

FRANCE:

10,000 people march in Paris to protest at the World Health Organisation's classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder. They also demand that the age of consent for gay men be reduced to 15, the same as heterosexuals. (this would be achieved in 1982)

1982

BRITAIN: Homosexuality legalised in Northern Ireland In 1977 an attempt to equalise the law to put it on parity with England and Scotland was scuppered by Ian Paisley's 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign. However, in 1982 a gay rights activist named Jeff Dudgeon took the government to the European Courts and won the case, forcing the equitable legislation through.

Terrence Higgins dies from AIDS related illness. Following his death, and in the face of government inaction on AIDS, his lover, Rupert Whittaker and activist Martyn Butler begin a trust to raise funds for medical research and to support other people with AIDS. By 1983, this became the 'Terry Higgins Trust', which was granted charitable status by the end of that year. It was the first non-government AIDS service in the UK and again, in the face of government inaction began to disseminate information on AIDS to London and eventually the rest of the country. In 1993 it became 'The Terrence Higgins Trust', marking its change to a professional organisation. This group is one of the markers of the LGBT community's reaction to the AIDS crisis, in that it showed a community determined to do what it could to protect itself against the disease, in times when the public's protector – the government – refused to act.

USA: The first television report on AIDS is broadcast. NBC TV broadcast a report on 'the study which shows the lifestyle of some male homosexuals has triggered an epidemic of a rare form of cancer.'

1983

US: Gerry Studds becomes the first ever national politician in the US to come out as gay while in office. Following his 'revelation' he continued to serve as a Democratic representative for Massachusetts until 1996 **The Reagan administration proposes a reduction in federal funding for AIDS programmes at the Centre for Disease Control** SEATTLE: police circulate a list of AIDS patients called 'AIDS ALERT' amongst officers. After protests from activists and civil rights unions, it is destroyed After lesbians and gays stage a sit-in at her exclusion from speaking, black lesbian writer Audre Lorde spoke at the 20th Anniversary of Martin Luther Kings Jnr's March on Washington

1984

NEW SOUTH WALES: Homosexuality is legalised

BRITAIN: Chris Smith becomes the first gay male to come out whilst an MP 'Gay's the Word' bookshop, the UK's largest lesbian and gay bookshop is raided by police and over 800 books are seized. The shop would later be tried for obscenity

US/FRANCE: the HIV virus is identified.

Whilst the AIDS virus (previously known as GRID – Gay Related Immune Disorder) had been identified, the cause of this virus was unknown. Robert Gallo, in the US, had identified a virus he called HTLV (Human T-Cell Leukemia Virus) as a possible cause of AIDS, especially in its variant forms, HTLV-1 or HTLV-2. Meanwhile in France, Luc Montagnier, had discovered LAV (Lymphadenopathy Associated Virus) which appeared to disprove Gallo's link between AIDS and HTLV-1 and HTLV-2. Gallo went back into research and discovered HTLV-3, which many claimed was identical to LAV. At the time there was great competition between France and the US as to who would discover the virus first and the thought that the two men had discovered the same virus led to meeting at Presidential level to allow a joint discovery honour. It should be noted that the links between the two viruses has still never fully been proven. ['And the Band Played on' – Randy Shilts](#)

There are a reported 1,807 deaths from AIDS in the US alone The FBI release over 7,500 pages of information gathered on gay groups over the last 30 years

BRITAIN:
241 AIDS deaths are recorded in Britain. It is estimated that 20,000 are carrying the disease. Burke's Peerage' begins to exclude the names of people with AIDS from their list of eligible marriage partners for British nobility

1985

FRANCE:
The French National Assembly pass a bill to protect Lesbians and Gays from discrimination in employment and access to services.

USA:
The Centre for Disease Control puts funds for 14 safe-sex education leaflets 'on-hold' as they are embarrassed by the sexually explicit content. **A blood test for HIV becomes available in the US. However, the National Gay Taskforce and 16 other gay groups urge people not to take the test because of fears about discrimination, unreliability of the test and confidentiality.** A survey of 500 lesbians and gay s in Philadelphia finds that 63% of men and 39% of women have suffered from homophobic violence and threats of violence

USA:
AIDS is officially the largest killer in New York of men aged 30 – 44 and women 25 – 29 The Supreme Court upholds Georgia's Sodomy Law, which states 'it is the very act of homosexual sodomy that epitomises moral delinquency.' This causes Coretta Scott King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr., to publicly declare her 'solidarity with the gay and lesbian community.'

1986

BRITAIN: Police carry out 'Operation Spanner'
During a raid, the police seize a video tape showing a number of men participating in heavy S/M activities. Claiming that they were convinced a murder was taking place, the police began a murder investigation. The investigation (rumoured to cost around £4m) showed that no-one had been murdered or even suffered lasting injury. All the men had consented to the activities. However, prosecutions were sought and the men were given jail sentences or fined. Their defence was that they had consented to the activities, but the Judge ruled that their activities fell outside of exceptions in the law of assault (for example boxing), basically ruling that during sexual activities, if the pain suffered was anymore than momentary or injuries not 'so slight as to be discounted' then the acts were illegal. The men's convictions were upheld by the Appeal Court as well as the House of Lords.

1987

1988

ISRAEL: Homosexuality is legalised

CANADA: homosexuality is legalised for those aged 18 and above

UK: Section 28 becomes law

Section 28 of the Local Government Act made it illegal for any council or government body to 'intentionally promote homosexuality, or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality'. The loose terms of the section meant that it was very difficult to determine exactly what 'promotion' was. While there were no prosecutions during the Sections' existence, it created great problems for teachers: could they continue to teach literature which covered gay issues or even texts written by homosexuals? How would they tackle homophobic bullying? It also gave carte blanche to homophobic local councils to cut funding to LGBT helplines or helpgroups – and even those councils who were not homophobicly inclined worried about whether they could be prosecuted. Section 28 can be seen as an icon of the Thatcher era, in that minority groups, especially LGBT people, could no longer take things for granted. Customs and Excise began to come down hard on issues of censorship. Police harassment of LGBT people increased. Mary Whitehouse (see 1977) gained 'insider status at Number 10... See **Margaret Thatcher (1979)** for further information)

1989

BRITAIN: 'Stonewall' is founded

As a shocked reaction to the introduction of **Section 28**, actors Michael Cashman, **Ian McKellen** and others form Stonewall to campaign for the repeal of the law. Lisa Power who has worked for the group defined it as '(not being) a gay organisation as we knew it. It was much more a small company, talking to Parliament, which nobody had done before. It had been greeted with a large amount of resentment by the existing right-on professional activists, who were horrified by the 'straightening' of gay activism, which it represented. And it did represent that.' The group has gone from strength to strength, campaigning on numerous issues, including asylum and immigration. Over the years Stonewall has gained a reputation for being secretive and selective with who it will work. Indeed, in 2004, Stonewall are perceived as an 'insider' group, with links to New Labour, giving rise to suspicions that they will compromise on important issues to keep their links, leaving more controversial or 'dirty' subjects to other groups such as trades unions. Whatever the reality, Stonewall has become an important force for change in society and have contributed greatly to the lives of LGBT people.

1990

BRITAIN: 'Outrage!' is founded

Founded by **Peter Tatchell** and others, Outrage! instantly set itself in opposition to the more polite Stonewall, by being a radical group based around direct action. Its statement of aims were:

Outrage! Is a broad based group of lesbians, gay men, queers and bisexuals committed to radical non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to:

- **Assert the dignity, pride and human rights of lesbians, gay men, queers and bisexuals**
- **Fight homophobia, discrimination and violence against lesbians, gay men, queers and bisexuals**
- **Affirm the rights of lesbians, gay men, queers and bisexuals to sexual freedom, choice and self-determination**

Over the years, Outrage! has created controversy both within the LGBT community and outside – notably with its direct action stunts such as protesting at Westminster Abbey over the homophobia of the Church of England. Recent campaigns include the fight against homophobic dancehall artists appearing in the UK and the levels of homophobia in Jamaica. Again, while not everyone agrees with the actions of the group, no one can deny the excitement, drama and publicity which their actions create and the subsequent pushing forward of the LGBT agenda. '[Outrage! An Oral History](#)' – Ian Lucas

1991

UKRAINE: Homosexuality is legalised

HONG KONG: Homosexuality is legalised

ISLE OF MAN: Homosexuality is legalised

1992

ESTONIA: Homosexuality is legalised

LATVIA: Homosexuality is legalised

WORLDWIDE: The World Health Organisation (WHO) removes homosexuality from its classification of illnesses

RUSSIA: Homosexuality is legalised for those aged 15 or over (with the exception of the Chechen Republic)

1993

LITHUANIA: Homosexuality is legalised

EIRE: Homosexuality is legalised (see David Norris (1944) for further details)

USA: Brandon Teena is murdered

Born Teena Brandon, Brandon Teena moved to Humboldt, Nebraska to live full time as a male prior to gender-corrective surgery. Passing easily as male, Brandon was discovered to be physically female by police when he was picked up on a minor forgery charge. The police made this information public via the press. Two weeks later Brandon was raped and beaten by two men he knew – Nissen and Lotter. Despite being threatened with death if he reported the incident to the police, Brandon did indeed report the incident but despite identifying the attackers, no charges were brought by the police. Leaving the town, Brandon was found shot, execution style thirty miles away. Nissen and Lotter were tried and convicted for the murder, one receiving the death sentence. However, after the trial Brandon's mother took the police to court, claiming that their actions had contributed to her son's death. The police denied this. They denied that 'outing' Brandon in the press contributed to the rape and attack (despite the fact that trial witnesses stated that Nissen and Lotter were 'enraged to discover that Brandon was living as a male but was biologically female). They denied that, prior to the murder, they did nothing to convict the rapists (despite the fact that the Sheriff's deputies claimed that they believed Nissen and Lotter were guilty of the crime but their Sheriff – Charles B. Laux – told them not to arrest the pair). The court rejected the claims too, claiming that Brandon was '1% responsible for his own death.' However, Brandon's mother persevered and at an appeal court in Nebraska, found the police conduct in the case (a police force whose Sheriff said of Brandon 'you can call it 'it' as far as I'm concerned') 'Utterly intolerable in a civilised society. The case highlights the small town attitudes to trans people and the confusion between trans and homosexuality in many people's minds. It also highlights the attitudes to women, in that once those men found out that Brandon was physically female they raped her – after all, what else are women for? For further information there are two excellent films: '[The Brandon Teena Story](#)', a documentary which talks to those involved in the case and uses police records to tell Brandon's story. There is also the film '[Boys Don't Cry](#)', starring Hilary Swank as Brandon.

1994

SOUTH AFRICA: Homosexuality is legalised for those aged 19 or over

ALBANIA: Homosexuality is legalised

UK: The age of consent for gay men is reduced to 18 (still two years more than that for heterosexuals which is 16)

1997

SCOTLAND: The Equality Network is formed

Founded to be one of the voices to lobby the newly formed Scottish Parliament in 'areas of law and policy which discriminate against LGBT people' the Equality Network has become the main LGBT campaigning group in Scotland whilst working with the other 4 LGBT groups. The Network holds an annual 'Equality for All' conference and have scored numerous victories since their inception: Amending the Sexual Offences Bill so that men who consent to sex with other men aren't placed on the 'paedophile register'; produced a document which places equality issues at the core of policy and law making in the Scottish parliament; fighting the Bank of Scotland over its links with US far-right evangelist Pat Buchanan and helping to force the bank to cancel its proposed business partnership. However, its greatest success, and bloodiest battle, was in 1999 – 2000 when it fought to repeal Section 28 on Scotland, a battle won in June 2000, proving that the Equality Network are a force to be reckoned with. (see 2000 – Section 28 repealed in Scotland for further details)

SOUTH AFRICA: Becomes the first country in the world to introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation into its constitution.

TASMANIA: Legalises homosexuality

USA: Barney Frank comes out, the second person in the US House of Representatives to do so.

1998

US: Matthew Shepherd is murdered

On October 12 1998, 21 year old Matthew Shepherd was beaten, his skull smashed with a gun butt, stripped naked, tied to a fence post and left for 18 hours before being found, dead. Murdered for being openly gay, Matthew's murderers were only spared the death sentence at the request of his parents; said his father Denis: 'My son died because of your ignorance and intolerance...my son has become a symbol – a symbol against hate and people like you, a symbol for encouraging respect for individuality; for appreciating that someone is different; for tolerance...I give you your life in the memory of one who no longer lives. May you live a long life, and may you thank Matthew every day for it.' The murder provoked much discussion about homophobia in the US: while many politicians denounced the crime, right-wing Christian groups used it as the chance to condemn homosexuality. It also highlighted the issues facing LGBT people in small town America as well as the need for anti-discrimination legislation. www.matthewshepherd.com **Tammy Baldwin becomes the first open lesbian to be elected to federal legislative office and the first person to run for the first time as openly gay or lesbian and win**

BRITAIN: Justin Fashanu commits suicide

The first British Professional footballer to come out as gay, Fashanu was born in 1961 and played in England's Youth and under 21s team before making his professional debut at Norwich City in 1979, where he scored 'Match of the Day's' goal of the season in 1980. When he transferred to Nottingham forest in 1981 he became the first £1M black player in Britain. At Notts. Forest, manager Brian Clough learned of Fashanu's homosexuality and suspended him. When the player turned up to games, Clough had him escorted from the ground. Following an injury, Fashanu left the UK to continue his career in the US, returning in 1989, just before coming out in 'The News of the World'. Following the uproar, Fashanu returned to the US to manage a junior team. However, while there a 17 year old claimed he had been sexually assaulted by the star. Questioned by US police, Fashanu was released and returned to England, only to hang himself a few days later. Rumours flew around that a police warrant had been issued for his arrest – however at the inquest into his death, this was proven to be untrue. A perfect and tragic example of the treatment of LGBT people by the tabloids, Fashanu said, 'I have been greatly criticised for coming out in the tabloid press. Many people thought I just did it for the money. I suppose they have never stopped to consider that my world is based around The Sun and Daily Star readers: the football world has that kind of mentality, it doesn't read The Times. I genuinely thought that if I came out in the worst newspapers and remained strong and positive about being gay, there would be nothing more they could say. Of course, I was wrong and lost three years of my career.' Fashanu's case also highlights the attitudes of the tabloid press to homosexuals: On the day of his suicide, The Sunday Mirror 'reported': 'Are You a Victim of runaway Fash?'. 'Gay soccer star Justin Fashanu – charged with sexually assaulting a teenage boy – may have attacked other victims...a police spokesman said 'there may be more victims. It is possible is this type of case...'

On the day after his suicide, The Sun 'reported': 'Fugitive Soccer Star Justin Fashanu indulged in a final orgy of homosexual lust at a seedy sauna.'

BRITAIN: Trans people gain legal protection in the field of employment.

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against trans people. The regulations cover all those people who intend to undergo gender reassignment; are undergoing gender reassignment or has undergone gender reassignment in the past. The only exception to this is where an employer can prove that a person's gender is a 'Genuine Occupational Qualification' for that job – for example, if a person has to perform intimate examinations of women, it may not be appropriate for that person to be employed in that situation if they have gender reassignment to a male. Once again, while not perfect this was a landmark step for trans people – and one which lesbians, gay men and bisexuals would have to wait another four years for.

1999

SCOTLAND: The Scottish version of Section 28 is repealed despite one of the most viciously homophobic campaigns seen in the UK

When the campaign to remove the Scottish Equivalent of **Section 28** began, few could have seen the vicious campaign which would ensue, primarily run by Brian Souter, the millionaire owner of the 'Stagecoach' bus company. Putting his own money into the campaign, with billboards, newsletters etc, the campaign had supporters in the Scottish press and church (notably in the form of Cardinal Winning), all using their space to regurgitate myths and homophobic lies about the gay community. The **Equality Network** and other worked tirelessly to counter these 'stories' and eventually won the day. However, it was a bruising battle – and one which, in some ways probably made the repeal of Section 28 in the rest of the UK a relatively easy and uncontroversial move.

2000

UK: Ban on lesbians and gays serving the armed forces is lifted

UK: the age of consent for gay men is reduced to 16

UK: Section 28 is repealed

UK: Lesbians and Gay men gain protective legislation in the field of employment

As a result of an E.U. directive the British Government introduced the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 to protect people against discrimination based on their sexual orientation. The regulations cover victimisation, harassment and discrimination against an individual . They also cover all sexual orientations including heterosexuals, as well as people who are discriminated against because of their perceived/presumed sexual orientation or because of people with whom they associate (e.g. someone may be discriminated against because a friend or family member is lesbian or gay). The regulations, however, were felt by many to be severely flawed: certain employers who prove that they have a legitimate reason will be allowed by law to refuse to employ or fire someone because of their sexual orientation. The fear is that religious employers may use such 'opt-outs' to continue to discriminate. The other major criticism of the regulations is that, unlike other major pieces of anti-discrimination legislation such as those covering race and gender these regulations do not cover the provision of goods and services. E.g. while it is illegal to refuse to serve someone in a shop because they are female or black, anyone who is refused such a service because of their sexual orientation has no such recourse to law – engendering a feeling that this is a 'second-class' piece of legislation.

2003

UK: The Sexual Offences Act is introduced

This bill was intended to correct many of the problems with previous Sexual Offences legislation, especially around gay men. The basic gist of the Act was to make most 'minor' offences only an offence if a third party sees that act take place and makes an official complaint. Many acts which were also previously male-specific (i.e aimed at gay men) were made non-gender specific. However, certain parts of the Act gave grave cause for concern. A new clause was inserted to make sex in a public toilet illegal, whether a third party complains or not. Intended as an attack on gay men (although it is not gender specific) it creates an odd situation, in that you can have sex outside a public toilet and will not be arrested unless someone complains, but 1 meter away inside the toilet you will be arrested, complaint or not. This is the first piece of anti-gay legislation published since Section 28. Another cause for concern was the criminalisation of young people who have sex under the age of consent – as well as those who allow such acts to take place under their roof. So, for example, if a parent is aware that their child is having sex and wishes them to do it in the home – a safe environment - then both the children and the parent would be classed as criminals.

2004

UK: Trans people can legally change their birth certificates to their 'corrected' gender

The Gender Recognition Act allows trans people to change the sex on their birth certificate to their correct (post-operative) gender. Once this has been granted the person will become entitled to the same benefits as befits anyone of that gender. While not perfect (for example, if a male and female are legally married, but the male is trans and has corrective surgery to become a female, then the couple must have their marriage annulled, to avoid them becoming a same-sex legal marriage), the bill is a huge step forward for trans people in Britain, giving those granted state recognition and benefits. For further information about the full process see www.grp.gov.uk

UK: Civil Partnerships become legal for same-sex couples

2005

UK: The first ever LGBT History Month...

Bibliography

This list aims to supplement the texts already listed in the previous pages
Those books marked with a * were used for dates, incidents, facts and figures

General LGBT history

'Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth Century America' – Molly McGarry & Fred Wasserman

'The Long Road to Freedom: The Advocate History and the Lesbian and Gay Movement'*

'Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History' – Robert Aldrich and Garry Wotherspoon (Eds)*

'Who's Who in Contemporary Lesbian and Gay History' - Robert Aldrich and Garry Wotherspoon (Eds)*

Both the 'Who's Who' books are an essential list of figures in our history and include many, many people who could not be included in this booklet. They also include many useful book references for those interested in a particular person

'The History of Sexuality (3 Volumes)' – Michel Foucault Be careful of Foucault's history, which was never his strong point. However, the books are interesting for his theories on how the homosexual was 'created' and have proved very influential

UK History

'Its Not Unusual: A History of Lesbian and Gay Britain in the Twentieth Century' – Alkarim Jivani. An excellent outline and an easy read. Very good on oral history of the people who 'were there'.

'Sex, Death and Punishment: Attitudes to Sex and Sexuality since the Renaissance' – Richard Davenport-Hines.* An excellent survey of incidents and facts and figures relating to how British society has dealt with homosexuality via the law and the responses to AIDS

'Against Nature: essays on history, sexuality & identity' – Jeffrey Weeks*

'No Bath but Plenty of Bubbles: an oral history of the Gay Liberation Front 1970 – 1973' – Lisa Power*

'Come Together: the years of gay liberation 1970 – 1973' – Aubrey Walter*

'Coming Out' – Jeffrey Weeks

'Who's A Pretty Boy then? One Hundred and Fifty Years of Gay life in Pictures' – James Gardiner

'Modern Nature' / 'Smiling in Slow Motion' – Derek Jarman. Jarman's diaries from the 1980s and 1990s – give a fascinating insight into living as a gay man with HIV under the Thatcher government

Lesbian History

'Not a Passing Phase: Reclaiming Lesbians in history, 1840 – 1985' – Lesbian History Group

'From the Closet to the Screen: Women at The Gateways Club 1945 – 1985' – Jill Gardiner.
While a history of the lesbian club made famous by the film 'The Killing of Sister George', it is also an excellent oral history of lesbian life from the 1950s onwards

'Passions Between Women' – Emma Donoghue

'Immodest Acts: the life of a lesbian nun in Renaissance Italy' – Judith C. Brown

Trans History

'Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman' – Leslie Feinberg

'Dear Sir or Madam: the autobiography of a female-to-male transsexual' – Mark Rees

'Man Enough to be a Woman' – Jayne County

'Mirrors: a Portrait of a Lesbian Transsexual' – Geri Nettick with Beth Elliot

AIDS

'The End of Innocence: Britain in the Time of AIDS' – Simon Garfield*

'Practices of Freedom: Selected Writings on HIV/AIDS' – Simon Watney

APPENDIX 1

A country-by-country survey of the age of consent for lesbians and gay men in comparison with heterosexuals (see end of list for notes on entries)

country	heterosexuals	gay men	lesbians
Algeria	16	illegal	illegal
Argentina	12/15/16	12/15/16	12/15/16
Armenia	16	illegal	illegal
Austria	16	14	14
Bahamas	16	18	18
Bahrain		illegal	illegal
Bangladesh		illegal	illegal
Barbados	16	illegal	
Belgium	16	16	16
Bermuda	16	18	16
Bolivia	17		
Bosnia	16	16	16
Botswana	16F/14M	illegal	
Brazil	14/18	14/18	14/18
Brunei	14/16	illegal	illegal
Bulgaria	14/15	14/18	14/18
Burma		illegal	
Cambodia	15/16		
Cameroon		illegal	
Canada	14	18	14
Chile	12	18	18
China	14		
Hong Kong	16	21	
Colombia	12/14	14	14
Costa Rica	15/16	15/illegal	15/illegal
Croatia	14	14/18	14/18
Cuba	16	16	16
Cyprus	17	17	17
Czech Republic	15	15	15
Denmark	15	15	15
Dominica	16		
Dominican Republic	18	18	18
Egypt	18	18/illegal	18/illegal
El Salvador	16		
Estonia	14	16	16
Ethiopia	15		
Fiji	16		
Finland	16	18	18
France	15	15	15
Georgia (Russia)		illegal	
Germany	14/16	14/16	14/16
Greece	15/17	17	15/17
Grenada	17	illegal	illegal
Guatemala	18	18	18
Guyana	13	illegal	illegal
Haiti	18	18	18
Honduras	14/17	14	14

country	heterosexuals	gay men	lesbians
Hungary	14	18	18
Iceland	14	14	14
India	16	illegal	illegal
Indonesia	17	no laws	no laws
Iraq	18	n/k	n/k
Ireland	17	17	17
Israel	16	16	16
Italy	14	14	14
Jamaica	16	illegal	illegal
Japan	16/18	16/18	16/18
Jordan	16	illegal	illegal
Kenya	16	illegal	illegal
Korea	13	13	13
Kosovo	14	18	14
Kuwait		illegal	illegal
Lebanon	15/18	illegal	illegal
Lithuania	16	18	16
Luxembourg	16	16	16
Malta	12/18	12/18	12/18
Mexico	12	18	18
Monaco	15	15	15
Montenegro	14	14	14
Mozambique		illegal	
Netherlands	12/16	12/16	12/16
New Zealand	16	16	16
Norway	16	16	16
Oman	none	illegal	illegal
Papua New-Guinea	16	illegal	16
Peru	14	14	14
Poland	15	15	15
Portugal	14/16	n/k	n/k
Philippines	12/18	18	18
Romania	14	illegal	illegal
Russia	14/16	14/16	14/16
Rwanda	18	18	18
Senegal		illegal	illegal
Serbia	14	18	14
Singapore	14/16	illegal	illegal
South Africa	16	19	19
South Korea	13	13	13
Spain	13	13	13
Sri Lanka	16	illegal	16
Sweden	15	15	15
Switzerland	16	16	16
Taiwan	16	16	16
Tanzania	16	illegal	illegal
Trinidad & Tobago	16	illegal	illegal
Tunisia	20	illegal	illegal
Turkey	15/16	18	18
Uganda	18	illegal	illegal
UK	16	16	16
UK: N. Ireland	17	17	17
Ukraine	16	16	16
United Arab Emirates	18	illegal	illegal
Venezuela	16	16	16
Yugoslavia		18	
Zaire		illegal	
Zimbabwe	12/16	illegal	illegal

Country	Heterosexuals	gay men	Lesbians
USA:			
Alabama	16	illegal	illegal
Alaska	16	16	16
Arizona	18	law repealed	law repealed
Arkansas	16	law invalidated	law invalidated
California	18	18	18
Colorado	15/17	17	17
Connecticut	16	16	16
D.C	16	law repealed	law repealed
Delaware	16/18	law repealed	law repealed
Florida	16/18	illegal	illegal
Georgia	16	16	16
Hawaii	16	law repealed	law repealed
Idaho	16/18	illegal	illegal
Illinois	17	17	17
Indiana	16	16	16
Iowa	14/16	law repealed	law repealed
Kansas	16	illegal	illegal
Kentucky	16	law invalidated	law invalidated
Louisiana	17	illegal	illegal
Maine	16	16	16
Maryland	16	law invalidated	law invalidated
Massachusetts	16/18	law invalidated	law invalidated
Michigan	16	illegal	illegal
Minnesota	16	law invalidated	law invalidated
Mississippi	16	illegal	illegal
Missouri	14/17	illegal	illegal
Montana	16/18	18	18
Nebraska	17	law repealed	law repealed
Nevada	16	18	18
New Hampshire	16	18	18
New Jersey	16	16	16
New Mexico	17	13	13
New York	17	17	17
North Carolina	16	illegal	illegal
North Dakota	18	law repealed	law repealed
Ohio	16	law repealed	law repealed
Oklahoma	16	illegal	illegal
Oregon	18	18	18
Pennsylvania	16	16	16
Rhode Island	16	law repealed	law repealed
South Carolina	14/16	illegal	illegal
South Dakota	16	16	16
Tennessee	18	law invalidated	law invalidated
Texas	17	illegal	illegal
Utah	16/18	illegal	illegal
Vermont	16	law repealed	law repealed
Virginia	18	illegal	illegal
Washington	16/18	16/18	16/18
West Virginia	16	18	18
Wisconsin	18	18	18
Wyoming	16/18	law repealed	law repealed

Notes on the Age of Consent list:

- Of course, just because a country states that an act is legal, this may not bear any relationship to how LGBT people are treated. Compare the legality of sex between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples and the cases reported by Amnesty International – you could start by reading their booklet: [‘Breaking the Silence: Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation’](#)
- Where no entry exists, then there is either no law in existence or the information is unavailable.
- Where two ages exist under the same heading, for example ‘16/18’, this means that the country has confusing laws which dictate different ages for different acts, or may have different ages of consent in different areas.
- **This list has been taken from the website: www.ageofconsent.com. Check out that website for full details on each country’s position and many interesting comments about each entry**

APPENDIX TWO

'Polari' – a selected glossary of terms

almond rocks	socks
aunt nell	listen, hear
aunt nells	ears
aunt nelly fakes	earrings
bats	shoes
bevy	drink
bijou	small
bona	good, beautiful
capella	hat
cod	naf
dish	arse
dog and bone	phone
dolly	pretty
eke	face
feely	young, young person
funf	pound
handbag	money
joobs	breasts
lallies	legs
latty	home
martinis	hands
naf	awful, tasteless, ugly
ogles	eyes
ogle fakes	glasses
omi	man
omi palone	gay man
polare	to talk, say
polone	woman
polone-omi	lesbian
pots	teeth
remould	sex-change
riah	hair
screech	mouth
schlumph	drink
slap	make-up
stimps	legs
stimp-covers	stockings
strides	trousers
varder	to look at, to see
vera (lynn)	gin
vogue	cigarette
zshoosh	to tart up, to mince
zshooshy	showy

